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No. 99

THE

UNIVERSALIST'S ASSISTANT;

OR

AN EXAMINATION

OF

THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS COMMONLY URGED AGAINST UNIVERSALISM.

He that is first in his own cause seemeth just;
But his neighbor cometh and searcheth him.—PROV.

BY A BELIEVER.

Darius Forbes

BOSTON:
ABEL TOMPKINS, 38,
AND
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1846.

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THIS VOLUME

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO

REV. HOSEA BALLOU, 2d, D.D.

AND TO

REV. EDWIN H. CHAPIN, A.M.,

As a token of the respect and esteem the Author cherishes for these men—the one as a diligent and persevering Theological Student, and the other as a General Scholar and an Eloquent Preacher—whose labors and influence have done so much to secure the attention and respect of other sects to the Universalist Denomination in the United States; and to encourage a manly independence in its ministry in forming and expressing their opinions; and to promote Theological Science among its members, and elevate the tone and spirit of its pulpit; and as personal friends, and Christian men, and lovers of truth and righteousness.

"It is not an unusual occurrence, when any new view of a theological or scriptural subject is broached, to array against it a host of objections, and to insist upon the formidable difficulties with which it is encumbered, as if the old view were free from all exceptions, and stood forth in self-evident truth; while, in fact, it was the difficulties attendant upon popular belief, which gave rise to the innovation."

Bush.

PREFACE.

This volume is rather unique in its character; and the author feels great diffidence in presenting it to the public. But it has long seemed to him that something of the kind was needed. Tracts have been and now are circulated all through the community, presenting an array of objections against Universalism, while there has been no *one* book, which could be placed in the hands of those whose minds are attempted to be influenced by these little books, in which their objections are answered in detail. Answers to very many of them are scattered through the various newspapers and books that have been published by the believers of this doctrine; but they are not available to the great mass of readers.

Were any apology needed for the peculiar character of this work, or the form in which its materials are presented, it would be the manifest advantages secured by it. In arranging the matter in the form of answers to objections, an opportunity is afforded to embrace a much wider range of topics in the same space, and make the materials directly available where wanted, to an extent which could not be secured by a formal treatise upon the several subjects which come under review. This form, therefore, seems better adapted to answer the great end for which it is designed, than any other that presented itself to the author's mind.

The author's attention was first called to the want of some book of this kind, about ten years since, by the circulation of great numbers of tracts, devoted to the exhibition of objections against Universalism, among the members of his congregation. At the request of some of his hearers, he prepared a series of dis-

courses, embracing the topics now included in the second chapter of this work. Since that time, he has directed a very considerable portion of his studies to the topics therein embraced, and the investigation of collateral subjects, enlarging his range of inquiry to all the matters embraced in this volume. And believing that the results of these inquiries and investigations may be of some service to the cause of religious truth, and with the advice of some friends, in whose judgment he has great confidence, he has concluded to present them to the public.

In the execution of his work, the author has aimed to present the several topics discussed, in as condensed and popular a manner as possible; to come direct to the subject in hand, without amplifying the arguments, or introducing illustrations, except in a few cases; trusting to the good sense of the reader to supply these, and his judgment and perception to get at the meaning, without their aid, from a plain and unequivocal statement of facts, and the use of the most simple and unambiguous language.

All reflections upon the want of candor and fairness on the part of the authors, whose works have furnished the objections noticed, have been avoided, although abundant occasion has been presented for comments of this kind. In numerous instances, the conviction has been most painfully forced upon the author's mind, that most of them were sadly wanting in honesty and integrity, in many of their statements, as well as in candor and fairness in argument. It seems as if very many things were said in a spirit of the most reckless malice, and with an entire destitution of all feeling of accountability for what they were writing. But all this has been passed over in silence, because thoughts and reflections of this kind, especially in relation to men claiming to write for the good of human souls, are extremely unpleasant and painful to an honest, ingenuous, and fair mind; and it is no gratification to it, to comment upon them. Beside, reflections upon the characters and doings of opponents, afford no good or satisfactory answer to the arguments they may adduce. These stand or fall upon their own merits. It has been the single object, therefore, to meet the objections

urged, in the spirit of candor and fairness; with how much success, others must judge.

The most difficult part of this work, in execution, has been the discussion of the several Hebrew and Greek words, which have been urged as objections against Universalism. It has been the aim to present the matter in such a way as to be intelligible to the mere English reader, and in so popular a form, that he can perceive somewhat of the state of things, in relation to these words, as it is exhibited to the minds of scholars. To gain this end, the text has been kept as free from these terms as possible, and some unusual expedients adopted; while notes have been pretty freely introduced, to put scholars upon the track which has led to the conclusions stated in the text. In this way, it is hoped, the book may be rendered of some service, in this department, to both classes of readers.

In the department of this work to which allusion is now had, it is not expected, that anything particularly new, to those who have looked into the subject, has been presented. Still, it is believed that much is presented, which may be new to the great mass of readers, or if nothing new is presented, it is hoped, at least, that old and familiar things are presented in a new and more striking light.

As will be seen from the quotations and references, all statements in relation to the usage of Greek words, and facts concerning them, from sources aside from the Scriptures themselves, have been derived from others. Reliance is placed entirely upon their accuracy and fidelity, as the author has not the means of verifying their statements, by an appeal to their authorities, if he has the requisite learning and ability. But such is the well established reputation of these authors, that there is no room to question either their accuracy or their fidelity. Still, in all cases, when in his power, the author has preferred to see with his own eyes, and thus know whereof he affirms.

The first person singular has been adopted throughout this work, to avoid seeming to speak in behalf of others, or to refer responsibility for the sentiments and facts presented, to others beside the author. And he here wishes to say, that he claims

to speak only for himself, not for any sect or body of men. He alone wishes to be held responsible for whatever is herein written, that the reader may deem untrue or in any degree exceptionable. All that this book contains is the free expression of the free thoughts of one who desires and claims to belong to the community of free minds; of diligent inquirers after truth, who would see with their own eyes, hear with their own ears, think with their own minds, and understand with their own understandings; of those who would follow truth meekly and reverently, but firmly and resolutely, wherever it may lead; and of those who scorn to be shut up within the narrow precincts of party or sect. And what is herein written, the reader is desired to regard as the utterance of such a mind.

With the sincere hope and the fervent prayer, that this little volume may contribute something to the extension of a liberal and enlarged theology; to more just and rational views of the divine character and government; to higher conceptions of human accountability and the great aims and offices of religion; to a more profound sense of the necessity of labor and effort, on the part of every individual, to secure the great ends proposed by religion; to the more thorough persuasion of all minds, that they are the *makers* of their own heaven or hell, and of the indispensable necessity of faith and repentance, as the means of salvation; it is submitted to the candid consideration of the public, and especially that portion of it, which embraces the idea of the absolute eternity of human punishment, at the hand of God.

Boston, April, 1846.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Importance of religion—sources of information concerning it—need to be interpreted—exercise of the rational powers, the only safeguard against guilty error—Universalism not a negation, but an affirmation—its transcendent beauty—the one thing needful in certain cases.

CHAPTER II.

MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

Page.

SECTION I. The Safe Side, ... 30

Belief alone, not an infallible surety of salvation—not a subject of prudential considerations—the belief of Universalism as safe as any other *ism*—men approved or condemned according to their characters—prudence demands the belief of Universalism.

SECTION II. The Safest Side, ... 43

Importance of belief—endless misery tends to form a character unlike that demanded by Christianity—Universalism favorable to the formation of Christian character—unsafe to believe its opposite.

SECTION III. Christ and his Apostles incompetent Teachers, . 53

The Scriptures not designed to explain and enforce a system of dogmatic theology—all errors not corrected by Christ and his apostles—this objection lies equally against Christianity and Protestantism—some of the most eminent Christians have been and are Universalists—persecution and wickedness have prevented the more general prevalence of this doctrine.

SECTION IV. Why did the Preaching of Christ and his Apostles alarm the Fears and excite the Enmity of Wicked Men? 73

Christ's and the Apostles' preaching alarmed men's fears, and awakened their enmity—proving Universalism will not produce this effect—all other *isms* in the same category—Universalist pulpit not limited to one idea—perverse sinners always offended at rebukes.

Page.

SECTION V. Universalism inconsistent with the Character of God as a Rewarder, ... 80

Punishment means, not ends—probation—present conduct and future condition intimately connected.

SECTION VI. Universalism inconsistent with God's Mercy, . 85

Universalism and the Bible err in the same direction—nothing unmerciful in rewarding men according to their works.

SECTION VII. God treats the Righteous worse than the Wicked, . 88

Founded upon the idea that all men enter upon a state of felicity immediately after death—a blessing to be killed if immediately happy.

SECTION VIII. There is no such thing as Forgiveness, . . 92

Punishment not merely vindictive or vindicatory—punishment prospective and consistent with forgiveness.

SECTION IX. The Necessity of Repentance, ... 96

Number saved does not affect the necessity of the use of means—the relation of cause and effect not denied by Universalists—religion important if no connexion exists between the present and the future—this connexion defined.

SECTION X. Universalism not needed by the true Christian, . 101

The unconcern of the wicked and worldly—Universalism dares not promise impunity to the most horrid and polluted of our race—endless misery tortures the purest and best only, in this world.

SECTION XI. Universalism pleasing to the carnal heart, . . 106

The natural heart pure—Universalism not pleasing to the carnal heart, but offensive—at war with all wickedness.

SECTION XII. A Universalist Meeting in a new place, . . 109

Character of Universalist congregations—where known only as represented by enemies, professed by all the vilest of society—enemies responsible for it.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORIGINAL WORDS RENDERED EVERLASTING, ETERNAL, ETC., CONSIDERED AS AN OBJECTION TO UNIVERSALISM.

SECTION I. Preliminary Remarks, ... 115

Subject involves much learned inquiry—relates to the original Scriptures—translations the mere judgment of fallible men as to the meaning of the original.

SECTION II. Admissions of those opposed to Universalism, . 118

Aiōn and *aiōnios* sometimes used in a limited sense—fatal to the position that they mean of necessity absolute eternity.

SECTION III. The Arguments by which it is attempted to fix upon the terms *aiōn* and *aiōnios* the sense of Endless Duration, considered. 121

Page.

Formation of the word *aiōn*—usage among the Jews—perpetuity of happiness and misery depends upon the permanency of character—duration of each individual's happiness and misery contingent—usage against the sense of absolute eternity.

SECTION IV. Additional Considerations to show the terms *aiōn* and *aiōnios* do not mean "absolute eternity," . . 136

Statements of Lexicons—Classical usage—Scripture usage—usage by the Christian Fathers.

SECTION V. Conclusion, ... 151

Used in a variety of senses—means an indefinite duration—spiritual—other words more decisive might have been used—misery will endure as long as men are bad.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HEBREW WORD SHEOL, COMMONLY RENDERED GRAVE AND HELL, CONSIDERED AS AN OBJECTION TO UNIVERSALSM.

SECTION I. Preliminary Remarks, ... 160

Ground of controversy changed—difficulties arising out of this change in managing a discussion.

SECTION II. Admissions of the Learned, ... 162

Change in the tone of remark by those opposed to Universalism—may mean a world of woe—hazardous to affirm more.

SECTION III. An Exhibition of the Usage of *Sheol*, . . . 164

Means the under-world, or state of the dead in general—inhabitants and their employments—men sent to Hades as a punishment.

CHAPTER V.

THE GREEK WORD HADES, COMMONLY RENDERED HELL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, CONSIDERED AS AN OBJECTION TO UNIVERSALISM.

SECTION I. Preliminary Remarks, ... 171

Change in the meaning of the term hades and hell—to be annihilated.

SECTION II. Classical and Jewish Usage of *Hades*, . . . 173

Place of departed spirits—dark, unsubstantial and shadowy—having rivers and gates—inhabitants unsubstantial forms—employments the ideal of those here—division into Elysium and Tartarus—place of purgation—Jewish views substantially the same as those of the Greeks and Romans.

Page.

SECTION III. New Testament Usage of the term *Hades*, . . 183

Jewish sense of the term Hades—the New Testament sense of this term.

SECTION IV. Exposition of Luke 16 : 23. 186

A parable—designed to rebuke some of the notions and the perverse obstinacy of the Jews—represents two individuals, first in this and then in the future state—an *argumentum ad hominem*—impassable gulf between the good and bad in this world.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GREEK WORD TARTARUS, RENDERED HELL IN OUR COMMON VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, CONSIDERED AS AN OBJECTION TO UNIVERSALISM. 194

Description of Tartarus—not used in the heathen sense by the apostle—used in the sense of sheol.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEBREW-GREEK WORD GEHENNA, ALWAYS RENDERED HELL IN THE COMMON VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, CONSIDERED AS AN OBJECTION TO UNIVERSALISM.

SECTION I. Preliminary Observations, ... 200

Not used as the name of a place of endless punishment in Christ's time—not found in the Apocrypha—at variance with collateral ideas.

SECTION II. The Derivation of *Gehenna*, ... 208

Name of a valley—used as a figure of punishment in general, without reference to time when or place where it is to be inflicted.

SECTION III. New Testament usage of the term *Gehenna*, . . 213

Expositions affirmative—Matt. 5 : 22 and 29, 30 ; 10 : 28 ; 18 : 8, 9 ; Mark 9 : 43—48 ; Matt. 23 : 15, 33; James 3 : 6.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL CONCLUSION. 230

UNIVERSALIST'S ASSISTANT.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Religion, in its relation to man, as a moral and accountable being, who is, at the same time, mortal and immortal, destined to live on forever, as a spiritual existence, is emphatically the subject of subjects. There is nothing that so nearly concerns his highest and best interests as this. It is so, because it is what relates to that part of his being which is immortal, and which must be affected, for weal or for woe, as it is regarded or disregarded, not only during his fleeting physical existence, but on his *entrance* at least, upon the verities of the spiritual world. As is the character he forms under its influence, during his present mode of existence, such must be his character and condition when the soul is ushered into the unseen realities of the world of spirits. This position few well-informed and reflecting minds will question.

The kind of character we form, and that we may think necessary to secure our highest good, must depend very much upon the *theological ideas* we cherish. In other words, what we *are* as men, in our dispositions, feelings, principles and habits—all that goes to make up the character—bears a nearer relation to what we *believe*, theologically, than many seem to imagine. Indeed, it is very much to be doubted, whether any man's character will be any more refined and exalted than his theological views. The whole history of man, as an intellectual and moral being, goes to establish this position.*

Religion then, coming and claiming to present truths of such infinite and eternal moment to us, and calculated so deeply to affect our characters and destiny, as moral and accountable beings, does it not demand, and ought it not to receive our most profound and earnest attention? Many of its teachings relate to the world beyond the darkness and silence of the grave, of which we can *know* nothing, in the common acceptation of this term, in this mortal state. All we can learn concerning that state is from revelation alone. We may speculate and conjecture about it; but no voice from the home of the dead, comes to tell us what it is, what their mode of existence, or what their employment

* Universalist Quarterly, Vol. 1, Art. xxiv., p. 256. Biblical Repository, Vol. 9, New Series, Art. 1 for April, 1843, p. 253.

and their condition. All the light that is shed upon its impenetrable darkness, comes from the great facts of our being, and the revelations God has seen fit to make in the volume of inspiration.

Now both these sources of information need to be interpreted. They address our *reason*, and with this for a guide, we are to search for the truths they would communicate. And no other means are offered for our protection against error, in reference to this matter, than in relation to all other subjects presented for human belief. Our only protection against error, which *involves guilt*, is diligence and faithfulness in examination, an unprejudiced and candid spirit in weighing testimony, and sincere and fervent desires to know and receive the truth, whatever it may be. If, with such a spirit, we fall into any error, it will not bring guilt upon our souls, nor will God condemn us for it. But if such is not our course, the spirit and temper of our minds, and our desires, we shall bring guilt upon our own souls, if we fall into error, and subject ourselves to the rebukes of the Most High. And even if we escape all error and attain all truth, it will secure no reward, because it will result from *circumstances*, not from our own *endeavors* after it.*

* Whewell's Elements of Morality, Vol. 1, pp. 243, § 336 and 327, § 455. Vol. 2, p. 113. ch. xiii. Harpers' Ed., 1845, 2 Vols. 16mo. "Undoubtedly the reception of a system, so pure in spirit and tendency as the gospel, is to be regarded

If such be the state of the case, how important it is, that we diligently and earnestly inquire after the truth, and give all that claims to come from God, a candid and fair examination, however widely it may differ with our present views! We may not innocently sit down and give ourselves up to inaction, as intellectual beings, in reference to religion, under the vain and presumptuous notion, that we have attained all truth, without any admixture of error. The idea of our own infallibility or that of our sect, is no less preposterous and absurd, than the claim for the infallibility of the Pope, or any other saint of the Romish calendar.

What imperfect creatures we are! How little do we know, much as we may boast of our intelligence! With all the distinguishing powers God has conferred upon us, how little can we see! How liable we are to be mistaken, even about the most ordinary affairs of life! How constantly are we committing mistakes and falling into errors, even upon the most plain, simple and obvious matters that fall under our observations! When we

in general, as a favorable sign. But let a man adopt this religion, because it will serve his interest and popularity; let him shut his mind against objections to it, lest they should shake his faith in a gainful system; let him tamper with his intellect, and for base and selfish ends, exhaust its strength in defence of the prevalent faith, and he is just as criminal in *believing*, as another would be in *rejecting* Christianity under the same bad impulses." Channing's Works, Vol. 3, p. 320; Boston, 1841.

go forth upon the earth, the very grass, earth and stones, which we tread under our feet, are covered with the thick veil of mystery! Whence came this grass, this earth, and these stones? How does this grass grow? Why is one kind of grass produced upon any given spot, rather than another? Why is it green, rather than red, black or some other color? Why is the ground, in any given place, composed of gravel or sand, rather than argile, alluvium, or some other kinds of earths? And these stones, of what are they composed? What has given them their peculiar forms and appearances? How many can answer such inquiries as these? And yet the answers to most of them, are clearly within the range of our powers.

We are endowed with our five senses, to guide us in our connexion with the material world; and yet, perfect as these are, the utmost wariness and caution, and continual effort is requisite to prevent us from committing mistakes. But with a full knowledge of all this, hardly a day passes but it is the witness of our betrayment into some error, much, perhaps, to our mortification, if not to our injury. With reason and experience to guide us in business, how many errors we commit in our calculations and plans! Nor is the loftiest genius and the largest experience sufficient, to protect men against this liability.

If we are so much exposed to errors and mis-

takes, from the imperfections of our nature, in relation to things of every-day life and of the outward and material world, and so limited in our knowledge of those things, subject to the examination of the senses, can we regard ourselves as having attained all truth, and as exempt from all liability to errors and mistakes, in reference to that greatest, grandest, highest, and most sublime of all subjects, religion—that subject which deals with the mysteries of the soul, and the world to come? And should not this very danger lead us to exercise modesty, humility and fear, in deciding upon the claims of our brother's peculiarities of faith, to consideration? Should it not lead us to pause, consider and examine, with the utmost fairness and candor, the opinions of others, before we venture to assume we are certainly right, or censure and condemn them, as in grievous and hurtful error? This, surely, is one of the most plain and obvious inferences from these facts.

With these views of the importance of attaining religious truth, to the formation of a right character, and of our liability to error, I cannot but regard it as perilous business, for any one to shut up his mind against all new light upon the subject of religion; to stifle all inquiry; to smother every doubt about present views, as profane; or to treat what is claimed from any respectable source, as truth from heaven, with neglect and contempt,

before a thorough and candid examination of these claims has been made. In such a course we shall not be held guiltless by our Maker. It was this spirit which led the Jews to reject Jesus. Let us beware of its indulgence, lest we are found fighting against God, and are involved in a like condemnation.

Is it with these views, and for the purpose of aiding my fellow-Christians in their inquiries after truth, that this work is entered upon. Before entering upon it, a few explanations are necessary, that the author and his readers may have a fair understanding of each other's meaning and intentions.

The terms Universalists and Universalism are placed in the title-page, and will frequently occur in this work. Different senses are attached to these words, at the present time, in the religious world, even when applied to the denomination of Christians which bear that name, and used to describe their views. Hence it seems necessary that an explanation of what is intended by these terms, be made. What is Universalism? Who are Universalists?

I reply, Universalism is *a doctrine*, not a *system* of doctrines. I say it is not a *system* of *doctrines*, because many of those who are known by this *name*, hardly hold any two doctrines in common, except such as are held in common by all who claim to be Christians. They agree in but *one* doctrine as distinctive and peculiar to themselves,

and upon which the name is founded. Let a *system* of *doctrines* be adopted, and the attempt be made to enforce it as Universalism, and those who now live together in harmony and good fellowship, would be alienated from each other, and the denomination torn into fragments. What, then, is this peculiar, distinctive and characteristic doctrine?

I answer negatively, that it is not the belief, that all the consequences of human conduct are confined to the present mode of being, as is sometimes represented. Such a restriction of the meaning of the term, would convey the idea to the world, that the distinguishing faith of the denomination of Universalists, is the belief of a mere *negation*—that all the consequences of men's habits of thought, feeling and action, are confined to the state this side of the grave. But this is *not*, neither was it *ever* a *fact*. There never has been a time since the denomination had an existence, when more or less of the members, both clergy and laity, were not believers in the doctrine of future punishment, or that present conduct would affect the future condition of man. How false, then, is such a definition!

But such a representation is not only false in fact, but wickedly unjust. If thus restricted in its meaning, the term Universalism is despoiled of its distinctive character. It is no longer a *proper* name, pointing out a particular class of religionists, but becomes a *common* name, descriptive of a *genus*

under which are several *species*. Admit such a definition, and the Deist and Atheist, who deny the truth of revelation, that man exists at all after the dissolution of the body, contemn public worship, and scoff at and ridicule all the great truths of religion, are as much Universalists, as those are, who believe in the existence of God, the truth of divine revelation, and human accountability; in Jesus Christ, and own him as their Master and Saviour; in the importance of social and public worship to man's progress in piety and virtue; and in the doctrine of human immortality, and that every human soul shall at last arrive at purity and bliss, and endeavor to live devoted and godly lives! And why? Simply because all alike believe, all the consequences of human action are confined to the present mode of existence, while there is as wide a difference in their positions, as there is between light and darkness—the one believing, that this is the case, because man will not exist after his mortal dissolution, and the other, because all men will be cleansed from all moral defilement. How unjust and false, then, is a definition which involves such consequences!

I remark then, affirmatively, that Universalism, instead of being a mere negation, is a positive affirmation. It is the simple doctrine of the final salvation of every human soul. It is not the mere denial of the doctrine of endless punishment, but

the positive affirmation, that all men will ultimately attain to *holiness*, and consequently to *happiness*. And those who embrace this doctrine, however widely they may differ in regard to other points of belief, are Universalists, theoretically.

Should I go more into detail, in defining what is meant by the term Universalism, by those who profess it, I would say, that they mean by it, not that the whole human family shall be delivered, so much from outward and material flames; not from the unimaginable terrors of a world of woe; not from everlasting perdition; but from what is more to be dreaded—from sin itself; from the evil of their own minds, which is the cause of what men do and are to suffer, as moral beings. They mean by it deliverance from the control of wrong principles and habits; a purifying of all souls from all that is base and vile, in thought, affection and principle; a removal of all the guilt and contaminations of sin; a plucking of all souls from that hell of darkness and guilt, into which the soul of every wicked man is plunged; that by being thus renovated, they are exalted to heaven. This is the fact in reference to both classes of Universalists. All the difference there is between them, in regard to this matter, is as to the *manner* of attaining this end. Those who believe the consequences of human action extend beyond the present state, suppose salvation to be attained in all cases, through each individual's own agency—the

voluntary exercise of his own powers, under God's blessing; and in so far as it relates to the present life, those who believe all the consequences of men's conduct are confined to this mortal existence, fully concur in this view. But they do not suppose this principle applies to another state. They think, that at death, or between death and the resurrection, all the corruptions of every human soul will be purged out, by some mysterious agency, wholly independent of the individual's volitions and the exercise of his own powers.*

Such is Universalism as it is understood by its friends; and although there seems to be a wide difference, so far as *practical* tendencies and influences are concerned, between the views of the two classes, as to the *manner* of attaining this great end, they agree in maintaining, that *holiness* is indispensably necessary to *happiness*, in all worlds; and it is on this ground, they are united together as one division of the church. They differ only in regard to the *method* by which this state of soul is attained, in the

* This view is only the popular view *universally* applied. That is, it is the popular view relative to those termed the regenerate, extended to all men, and I cannot see, if the *regenerate* are to have their *few* remaining corruptions at death, purged out by some means, independent of their own volitions, or the exercise of their own powers, why the more *numerous* sins of the *unregenerate*, may not be removed in the same way and upon the same principle. The one is certainly as rational, and philosophical, and, indeed, scriptural as the other.

world of spirits, which manifestly involves important consequences, in its bearings upon the present conduct of men, for if the condition of the human soul, upon its *entrance* into a future state, is not to be at all affected by the character formed in the present state, the motive to effort, in cultivating a character in conformity with God's law, is manifestly much weaker, than under the view, that all *holiness* is to be attained, in *all* worlds, by the exercise of our own volitions and powers—that it is the result of *action*, not a thing mechanically to be *conferred* upon the human soul, by some outward or foreign agency.

From what has been said, it appears, then, that Universalism is the single doctrine of universal salvation, flowing out of universal holiness, without reference to the *manner* or *method* by which *holiness* is attained. In other words, it is the restoration of the whole human race to goodness and virtue, and, as a consequence, to happiness.

Against this doctrine, many objections have been urged, from various sources, and it is the design of this work to meet and answer these objections, for the purpose of removing the difficulties they present to many minds, in the way of embracing Universalism. This topic is selected, because no work exists at present, which covers this ground, directly and specifically, that can be put into the hands of an inquirer, and the want of something of the kind

is often felt. For direct proof of the doctrine, the reader is referred mainly, to works already in existence in abundance.

In the discussion of the several topics that will claim the attention, it will be the object to give it as much of an *affirmative* character, as is consistent with a *negative* position. In meeting the several objections that will pass under review, it will be the effort to throw as much light upon the general subject, as the extent of the work will admit.

The point of doctrine involved in this discussion, I regard one of transcendant interest and importance, aside from the consideration of its being a religious matter. When we look out upon the world, and see the scene of darkness, confusion and misery that is presented to the mind's eye—the strife and contention, sorrow and despair, degradation and want, sin and misery; the human race debased and enslaved by unholy desires, by vice and crime, by wars and fightings, by domestic and civil commotions, and all the turmoil and wretchedness there is in the world, Universalism, like an angel of light direct from heaven, comes and tells us, that all this distressing scene shall give place to one of glory and peace! It tells us, that God has so arranged things, that a time shall come in his infinitely wise and beneficent counsels, when a scene of order and harmony shall succeed to this of confusion and strife, and man become the universal friend of man. It tells

us a time will come, under the divine government, when every degraded, enslaved and suffering one shall be relieved, elevated and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; when sin and crime shall cease, all evil passions be hushed to rest, and order, harmony and love shall not only prevail throughout the vast domain of the Creator, but in every human soul; and that all this shall be brought about through the mediation of Jesus Christ, acting upon human volitions.

When we look about us, and see how wide are the ravages of death—one after another of our neighbors and friends cut down on our right hand and on our left—leaving mourning husbands, widows, parents, children, brothers, sisters and friends, whose tears would make a mighty river, Universalism gently whispers in our ears, "Weep not;" for husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends shall all meet again, where sickness and death, sorrow and crying shall be unknown. It tells man, that a time will surely come, when there will be no bereaved husbands, no widows, no childless mothers, no broken circles of domestic love or social affection; but all husbands shall meet their lost wives, and all wives their lost husbands; all parents their children, and all children their parents; all brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends, each other, no more to be separated forever! It tells him every wound shall be healed,

every lost one found, and not one of earth's unnumbered millions shall be missing from the sun-light of God's countenance!

Is not this a bright and glorious prospect for our race? Who that has the heart of a man, must not contemplate such a consummation as the result of Christ's mission, with delight? What can be more grateful, than such a view, to a pure, benevolent and Christian mind and heart? Pause and meditate upon it a moment. A fallen world elevated to God! A family of prodigals returned in penitence and tears, to a father's house! A race of rebels brought back to their allegiance to the Infinite One! The universe attuned in every pulsation, in harmony with its Creator, its soul! What more grand and magnificent spectacle could be presented to the human mind! It is all the largest and most philanthropic heart can desire, and the most comprehensive and generous mind imagine.

Let not the reader say, as many have said before, "It is too good to be true!" Nothing is or can be too good for the Infinite Father to do. But let this very excellence of the view, commend the subject to your most devout and serious attention, and make you feel that it is preëminently entitled to a candid and fair investigation. This is all its believers ask for it; and if others cannot see as they do in reference to it, they can only lament their misfortune.

Besides this, there are circumstances in which

men are often placed, when nothing but Universalism can meet the wants of the most pure, devout and pious minds and hearts. When called to part with children or friends upon whom our fondest affections are placed, by death, who have gone away without that preparation we may deem necessary for a world of bliss, upon entrance into the spirit-land, what can meet our wants, in the sad hour of separation, but a hope that there is yet room for them to return; that the door of mercy is still open, and a Father's arms still extended to receive them, when they will turn toward him in penitence and faith? This is what the heart desires above all things, in this extremity; and the more pure and Christ-like it is, the more earnest these desires. But these desires cannot be answered, nor these wants met, except by Universalism. Is not this doctrine, then, worthy of the most profound attention of every human soul? It surely is so; for all are liable to be placed in these circumstances, and if we do not possess such a faith, we shall be left comfortless.

It will not do for us to try to comfort ourselves, in that hour, with saying, "God is just, and will do right with my child or my friends." If such are our views of his character and his government, that we think he can consistently doom any soul to endless perdition, it will be a hopeless task to attempt to make our *hearts feel*, that such a fate is just, much less

merciful for *our* children or friends. It can afford no comfort.

May I not expect, then, a candid and serious examination of what is herein said, in defence of Universalism, by every one into whose hands this volume may fall? This I demand of you as an accountable being, who must answer to God for your doings; a regard for your own comfort, and your highest and best good, as a moral agent and a spiritual existence.

CHAPTER II.

MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

SECTION I.—THE SAFE SIDE.

"On the ground of prudence, I am constrained to reject that system. It is a maxim, the correctness of which you will readily admit, that in every question of duty and happiness, where one side is doubtful and the other safe, it is the part of wisdom to take the safe side. Act according to this maxim, and you cannot be a Universalist." *

This objection has undoubtedly produced a tremendous effect upon a certain class of minds. It has unquestionably deterred many an honest and simple-hearted person, from all attempts at free religious inquiry. They are afraid if they venture to inquire, they *may* be led to adopt views other than they now hold, and these *may* prove false, and in consequence they *may* be eternally damned; forgetting entirely that they *may now* be in error, and exposed in the same way.

In reply to this objection, I remark, in general terms, that plausible as it may seem at first view, this objection is a most miserable and shallow sophism, as will be shown by several considerations.

1. This objection is founded upon the idea, that

* American Tract Society's Tracts, No. 224, p. 1.

the simple belief of a truth, is an infallible surety of salvation, without any reference to other circumstances. But this is a position to which no Protestant will adhere. Even the most strenuous believer in the doctrine of endless punishment will admit, that an individual may most cordially and heartily receive that doctrine as the truth, and yet be eternally lost. Wherein, then, is the *safety* of *believing* this, more than its opposite?

2. I remark, that belief is not the subject of volition, or any prudential considerations, except in an indirect way. It is the result of evidence supposed or real. The only way in which belief can be effected by our volitions, is in reference to evidence and its consideration. Men may shut their eyes against the light, and so rush on in darkness; or cultivate an uncandid spirit, and thus be blinded to the force of evidence, and in *this* way they may be governed, in their belief or unbelief, by their volitions, to a very great extent. But when a man has his eyes open and is possessed of a candid and serious spirit, his belief is controlled by the evidence presented to his mind He must believe according to the evidence he sees. Hence it will be seen, that the supposed *safety* in this case, lies not in the *belief*, but in the *avowal* of one's convictions; for it is the *avowal only* of a candid man's honest convictions, that is entirely subject to his volitions, or any prudential considerations whatever. So that the

amount of the matter is this; that it is *safer* to *profess* a belief in the doctrine of eternal punishment, while we really believe it is false, than *honestly* profess a belief of the doctrine of universal salvation! In other words, this objection is, in effect, maintaining that it is *safer*, under God's government, to be a *hypocrite*, than an *honest* man!

3. This objection involves consequences in another direction, which the objector himself will not admit. It is admitted on all hands, among Protestants, that a man may be saved if he is truly pious, whatever may be his religious belief. "But," says the Papist, "the whole Catholic Church, amounting to the larger part of the civilized world, hath ever held, and now holds, that no man who dies out of her communion, however deep and fervent his piety, can possibly be saved. Now admitting that the Catholic church may be *wrong*, no man has anything to fear from entering her ample bosom, and living piously there; for Papist though he be, he will be saved; but if she is *right*, the man who rejects her, loses everything beyond remedy. Hell is his everlasting portion." Does not prudence, then, demand that we should all become Papists, if the objection under consideration has any force?

From what has already been said, it will be seen that the reason of the thing shows, that it is just as *safe* to believe Universalism, as endless misery. I shall now show that it is so, from the Scripture

representations of the matter. The argument from this source will be what logicians call the *argumentum ad hominem*, that is, an argument drawn from the admitted premises of an opponent. What I mean is, that I shall admit, for the sake of the argument, the objector's interpretations of the texts I shall quote, so far as their application is concerned, and then show, from these very texts, that the believer in endless misery is no more *safe*, if his own doctrine is true, than he who believes Universalism, so far as their eternal states are concerned.

Those who believe the doctrine of endless misery, generally maintain, that there is to be a day of general judgment, when every man is to be tried, and acquitted or condemned, according to a certain rule, and that this decision fixes the condition of the soul for eternity. This belief is founded upon that class of texts, which speak of Christ's coming to judge the world, in the last day. Admit there is to be such a judgment, and that by its decisions man's destiny is fixed for eternity, and the question arises,—What is the ground upon which the decision is made? In other words,—*For what* is one class to be acquitted; and, *For what* are the others to be condemned?

To satisfy our minds upon this point, it is only necessary for us to examine the descriptions of what is supposed to be the great day of final account—the general and final judgment, found in

the Scriptures. How do they represent the matter? I will take the following passage as a distinguished example.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee! or thirsty, and gave thee drink! When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in! or naked, and clothed thee! Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee! And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." *

From this it will be perceived, that these persons

* Matt. 25: 31—40.

were not approved, or pronounced righteous, merely because they believed one doctrine or another. Their belief is not named or called in question in any way. The king does not say, come unto me, ye blessed of my Father, because ye have believed the system of doctrines denominated evangelical or unevangelical. Nor did he pronounce them his friends and blessed, because they belonged to the Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Baptist, Methodist, Unitarian, Universalist or any other church whatever. The entire proceeding in this case, was predicated upon what the individuals really were as men, in their *doings*. They were commended and received into favor, on account of their acts of *practical* goodness—their acts of kindness and benevolence toward the suffering of their race, which was regarded and treated as if done to the Judge himself.

I ask, then, is not the individual who sustains the *character* represented in this description of the judgment, perfectly *safe*, whatever may be his speculative *belief*, even if this decision fixes his final and everlasting condition? Is not the Universalist who sustains the *character* therein described, just as *safe* as the believer in endless misery? It is even so; for it is their *works*, their *actual doings*, the *character* they form, not their *belief*, which secures the approbation of the Judge. Why, then, is it not just as *safe* for pious and good men to embrace

Universalism, as any other *ism*, so far as their eternal interests are concerned? I cannot see.

Let us now see why those on the other hand were condemned. "Then shall he also say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."*

Hence it will be seen, that these persons were condemned upon precisely the same principle, that the others were approved. They were not condemned on account of their *belief*—not because their belief was wrong—not because they believed too much or too little; but for their *deeds;* for neglecting or refusing to perform the common duties of life—the duties of kindness, benevolence and charity. The misfortunes, calamities and sufferings of

* Matt. 25: 41—46.

their kind, had not excited their commiseration, or moved them to acts calculated to afford relief to the suffering. In a word, they were condemned, because they had been selfish, unfeeling, unpitying.

There are one or two things in this description of the judgment, to which I wish to call the especial attention of the reader, although a digression from my main design. Their importance must be my apology.

It will be observed, that one class is approved and blessed because they had done certain deeds, and the other condemned because they had *not* done them. Now these deeds are mentioned, merely to present to our minds, in a stronger light, the *characters* of these two classes of men. It was not so much for the *deeds* done by one class, that they were approved and blessed, and the *deeds* neglected to be done by the other, that they were condemned, as for the *characters* they sustained, of which the *deeds* done or neglected are the representatives. On no other supposition can we explain the circumstance, that those who were condemned, are charged with no *positive* crimes, no malicious or positively wicked feelings, but simply with a *neglect* of duty, without any reference to the motives or feelings which dictated them.

When a judgment is to be passed upon men's *actions* merely, the motives, feelings and principles which actuated the individual, are always to be taken

into the account; but when a man's *character* is the subject of inquiry, not only his positive *doings*, but his *neglects*, are good evidence in the case, especially his *habitual* neglects. Indeed, these are more sure and positive testimony as to what an individual's *character* is, than any *individual* acts of positive wrong would be; for individual deeds of positive wickedness, might be the effect of powerful temptation, or strongly excited passion, while there is no settled depravity of heart; but *habitual* neglect of the common duties of life, such as are named in the Scripture just quoted, is the cool, deliberate and unprovoked work of an all-devouring selfishness, which cares not what becomes of the rest of the world, or how much it may suffer, if so be, that it is not disturbed in its enjoyments. Such neglects give the stamp of *certainty* to a man's *character*, as no acts of positive wrong could do; for in such *acts* evidence is afforded, as to the feelings and principles at the time of their perpetration only; but such *neglect* fixes the seal of reprobation upon the individual, not merely for the moment, but upon his *character*. It demonstrates what he is uniformly and unvaryingly, as a man.

Another thing that we should observe, in this account, is the *kind* of character so distinctly brought out, as the ground of man's acceptance or rejection with God. It is what is and ever has been too lightly esteemed by the most of Christians; so little

has it been valued, that some have even sneered at it, as mere human goodness, or natural *amiability* of character. It is that simple and unostentatious goodness of *heart*, which prompts men to spontaneous acts of kindness and charity; to seek to promote the good and happiness and relieve the distresses of those around them, without once thinking there is any peculiar merit therein. Hence, when those who were approved and blessed, were told *why*, they were surprised. They did not know, that they had done any such deeds. So with those who were condemned; they were equally ignorant of their neglect. Thus the truth is illustrated, that it is those acts about which men think the least, that are the truest *index* of the *character*, and which contribute the most to its formation. So also the fact is exhibited in a striking light, that what is done or neglected to be done to our fellow-men, is regarded and treated by the Almighty, as if done to himself.

The same general character pervades and distinguishes all the descriptions of the judgment, contained in the Scriptures. It nowhere proceeds on the ground of a man's *belief;* but always on his *conduct*, considered as the representative of his *character*. The inquiry is not, whether he is orthodox or heterodox; but whether he is good. It is not asked how many have been his prayers and religious performances;* but whether he is pos-

* I would not be understood by this to imply, that prayers

sessed of those pure principles, and that sympathy with his kind which lead him to spontaneous acts of kindness and benevolence.

As a further confirmation of this position, the following texts are adduced. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his *works*."* "Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be. . . . . Blessed are they that *do* his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."† "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have *done* good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have *done* evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."‡

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus,§ may serve as a further illustration of my position. The rich man was not sent to hell to lift up his eyes in torment for his heresy, nor was Lazarus placed in Abraham's bosom on account of his orthodoxy.

and religious observances are of *no* consequence, or that they may be neglected without peril. All I mean to say is, that they are of no value as *ends*. But as *means*, I regard them as of great importance. As such, they are indispensable to the attainment of the highest Christian excellence.

* Matt. 16: 27.
† Rev. 22: 12, 14.
‡ John 5: 28, 29.
§ Luke 16: 19—31.

The only thing brought against the rich man, was his want of a proper degree of attention to the wants and necessities of the poor and suffering at his gate. He was so entirely absorbed in securing his own selfish gratification, that he had no thoughts or attention to bestow upon the poor and suffering around him. His very dogs were more humane, and manifested a kindlier interest in the sufferings of his race, than their master.

From what has been said, it is manifest, that admitting these texts refer to a final judgment, and the eternal condition of men in the world to come, their respective states and conditions do not depend upon what they have honestly *believed* or *disbelieved;* but entirely upon what they *are*—upon what they have *done* as an exponent of what is their *characters.* In order, then, to be *safe*, or on the *safe side*, what must we do? Must we believe certain doctrines, subscribe to certain creeds, or join certain churches? Not at all. In this judgment, sects and parties are unknown, as well as creeds and dogmas of belief. Doctrinal belief is never called in question. The only inquiry in regard to every individual is—"What have you done? How have you lived? Have you been ready to minister to the wants and necessities of the needy and suffering, as your circumstances would permit? In other words, have you an amiable and kind *heart*, a pure, benevolent and good *character?*"

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? Plainly, that a Universalist with these qualifications, is precisely as *safe* as a believer in endless misery, admitting that doctrine true, and the latter *without* those characteristics, is as *unsafe* as the Universalist. There is no difference. Where, then, is the *safe side* or the *two chances* of the believer in the doctrine of endless punishment? and where the danger of believing in Universalism, if these things are true? The truth is, be the views of Universalists true or false, they are just as *safe* as those who reject these views, so far as their final and eternal state and condition is concerned, *if* they have as good *hearts* and as pure and unblemished *characters*, of which their habitual *doings* and *neglects* must be the witnesses. *The one has not the slightest advantage over the other, in this respect.*

It is a common remark of the candid among those who do not believe Universalism, that a man who really believes this doctrine, must be one of the happiest men in the world. Now if this witness is true, and the Universalist who is an honest and true man—a man who fears God and works righteousness, is as *safe*, so far as his final state is concerned, as those who reject his views, admitting the doctrine of endless misery true, has he not a decided advantage over the believers in the latter doctrine, so far, at least, as his *present* happiness is concerned? Instead, therefore, of common pru-

dence requiring men to reject Universalism at once, does it not demand, that so far as relates to their present happiness, they should eschew the opposite? Does it not demand, that men should endeavor to convince their minds, that Universalism is true, let the fact be as it may, rather than fear to receive it, or reject it without examination? It surely is so.

SECTION II.—THE SAFEST SIDE.

In the last section, it was my object to show, that even admitting the doctrine of endless suffering true, the Universalist is just as *safe*, other things being equal, as the believer of that doctrine.

Let it not be inferred, from this, that belief is to be regarded as a matter of small importance. It is of the very highest importance; for it is the foundation of all correct moral action; it is what distinguishes the Christian from the Infidel; and it exerts a great and abiding influence upon men's feelings, dispositions, principles and conduct. The influence it exerts upon any individual's character, must depend upon the prominence it holds in his mind. If it absorbs all the powers and faculties of his soul, it will become a ruling principle within him, and his character will become an exact embodyment of his inward faith. But however loosely a

man may hold his belief, it will exert some influence in the formation of his character, either for good or for evil. I know, indeed, that few men who adopt a good faith, ever become so good as their faith is; and equally true is it, that few men professing a *bad* faith, become as bad as their creed is. The good influences of society, and the redeeming qualities of human nature, hold them back, so that they are afraid or ashamed to do as bad as is the promptings of their unhallowed faith. But in spite of all internal and external influences, belief will do much in giving a determination to human character —vastly more than most persons imagine. A good faith contributes to the formation of a good character; and a bad faith will tend to form a bad character, however its influence may be modified by public sentiment, and the individual's sense of propriety. Hence that belief must be the *safest*, which has the strongest and most powerful tendency to secure the formation of such a character, as the gospel demands; and it is my purpose to show that Universalism is that belief.

The Saviour has reduced the whole of human duty to two requirements, which are the original elements of all correct moral action. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy-

self. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*

These are the principles from which must flow those good works, that secure the approbation of Heaven. And the man who is governed in all his ways by these principles, is perfectly *safe*, for time, and for eternity, be the doctrine of eternal punishment true or false. It can make no difference. Nor can it make any difference whether he believes or disbelieves it, if he really sustains such a character. The only difference it can make with any person, is its favorable or unfavorable tendencies upon the character. Which of the two doctrines under consideration, has the greatest tendency to form the character required by the gospel?

In reply, I remark, that it is a law founded in the nature and constitution of things, that like shall produce like. It is a law that obtains in the moral as well as in the physical world. Love will beget love, and hatred will beget hatred. Hence the possession of such affections and principles as are demanded by the Saviour, must greatly depend upon the views that are entertained of the Divine character, as unfolded in the plans and purposes of God, and the nature of man. Hence it is necessary that we discover something lovely in an object or an individual, that our affections may be secured. That we may love God, we must see something in

* Matt. 22 : 37.—39.

his character, as manifested in his plans, purposes and works, which renders him lovely. So in regard to man. We must be able to discover something in him, as the workmanship of God, that can claim our attachment, or we cannot love our neighbor. Consequently the doctrine that presents the most that is lovely in the Divine character, and the most attractive views of human nature, must be the *safest* doctrine to be received by men, even admitting eternal consequences are attached to our doings. Which of the two doctrines under consideration does this?

Before we can return an answer to this question, it is necessary for us to take a view of the character which each ascribes to the Deity. I will take the doctrine of eternal punishment first, and will present the matter in the language of a believer of this terrible doctrine. "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you, burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours." *

"If he eternally hates you, he will act in his

* Edwards' Works, Vol. 7, p. 496.

dealings with you, as one that hates you with mere hatred, without any love or pity. The proper tendency and aim of hatred is, the misery of the object hated; misery and nothing else. So that you may expect God will make you miserable, and that you will not be spared; for sparing is not the effect of hatred, but of pity and mercy, which is quite a different thing from enmity." *

Such is the representation of the Divine character by the doctrine of endless misery, and is there anything in it that is lovely? Is it a representation calculated to excite our admiration, or call forth our affections? Surely not. But on the other hand, it is revolting to the very last degree, in the view of every pure and good mind and heart. Men may fear to express it, or even confess the truth to their own minds; but they can have no other feelings than those of dislike and abhorrence of such a character. Such views cannot excite reverence, gratitude and love in any soul, however it may paralyze it with terror. All the dark and appalling views of God's character, presented by this terrible doctrine, can do, is to petrify with terror, and fill men's minds with amazement, and their hearts with dread, to subdue the soul, fasten upon it the chains of slavery, and extort from the individual, a pretence, a profession of love, to escape impending vengeance, but it will be all pretence. The feeling

* Edwards' Works, Vol. 7, p. 201.

cannot be there. As well might they be called upon to love the hateful hyena, whose hideous jaws are besmeared with a brother's blood?

Beside this, if like begets like, what effect must the contemplation of such a character have upon the individual that worships it? Must it not tend to form the same character in him? Will it not lead to the cultivation of the same temper and dispositions as are exhibited in his ideal of perfection, which is always embodied in the object of worship? The history of the world shows that it is so.* Let any man copy, in the temper of his mind and the feelings of his heart, the character ascribed to God, by the doctrine of endless misery, in the above extracts, and carry them out in his dealings and intercourse with mankind, so far as his capabilities and circumstances will permit, and would it be *safe* either for the individual or the community?

The religious world once undertook to copy the example of the Almighty, as he is represented by this doctrine, and it gave birth to the Inquisition, that most infernal of all the engines of mischief ever invented by man. And in so far as men have ever attempted to carry the principles and spirit of this doctrine into their intercourse with each other and the government of society, they have brought misery, degradation and ruin upon the world, and drenched the earth in blood. Is the belief of such

* Universalist Quarterly. Vol. 1., p. 256. Art. 24.

a doctrine *safe?* It cannot be; for if the evil, cruel and diabolical things that have grown out of its belief, and the attempts of men to carry its principles into practice in human society, are subject to the same reprobation as other evil deeds, and the doctrine itself proves true, no men are more certainly sealed victims of eternal torments, than vast multitudes of its most sincere believers and staunch defenders, and that, too, on account of endeavoring to *practise* in conformity with their *faith!* What can be more *unsafe*, than the belief of such a doctrine? Surely nothing; for it not only interposes an insuperable barrier against complying with the first great command, but leads men to form characters, which must secure their condemnation!

Equally unfortunate are the tendencies of this doctrine, in relation to the second great commandment. It presents the most dark and repulsive views of human nature. It describes men as "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil,"* so that although they "may have spoken the language of kindness to their friends, given useful instruction to their children, salutary advice to their neighbors;" although they "may have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and attended, with decency, the public

* Cambridge and Saybrook Platform, Confession of Faith, ch. 6, § 4.

worship of God, these same actions are all sinful;" so that "every thought, every train of reasoning, every conclusion, every imagination of the heart, and every purpose of the understanding, has been evil, and only evil, and that continually."* This while they are *unregenerate.*

Let any man entertain such views of his race, and what must be the effect upon his mind and feelings? Must it not be to make him distrust all men; to make him regard all goodness and virtue as shallow and insincere, unless accompanied with some *sectarian* badge; to make him narrow and exclusive in his views and feelings; and to harden his heart against his race? How can any man, who regards the great mass of mankind utterly destitute of all goodness, the enemies of God and all good, from their very natures, however aimable in their external conduct, and eminently virtuous in all their ways; who regards them as fiends in human shape; minions of satan, clothed in garments of light, have any love for them? *He surely ought not to love them.* It is a virtue to *hate* mankind, as one would satan himself, if such is their character. So that this doctrine interposes a powerful barrier against a compliance with the second great commandment.

There is still another way in which this doctrine

* National Preacher, Vol. 4, p. 222. No. for August, 1829.

operates against the formation of such a character, as the gospel demands. It describes all the demands and duties of religion, so far as relates to their character in the sight of God, in such dark and dubious terms, that no human understanding can apprehend them. It thickly spreads darkness and obscurity over the whole duty of man, and then calls upon him to engage in its performance, under the penalty of everlasting destruction! It hedges up the way of life with impenetrable darkness, and then calls upon men to escape from impending vengeance! If they complain that they cannot understand its directions, nor see the way it describes, it mocks them with the declaration, that they are not expected to see or understand, because their spiritual eyes have not been opened, and their understandings are yet carnal! In other words, it demands of men that they shall do, without understanding, and walk, with a firm and undeviating step, without seeing! Thus does it fill men's minds with hesitancy and doubt. They fear to go forward, lest they should go wrong; to go backward, lest they should stumble; to go to the right hand, lest they should enter the wrong path; and to go to the left, lest they should fall under the guidance of an evil spirit. Thus men are kept in suspense, waiting for they know not what, or make a desperate plunge into the sea of passion and sin, trusting to some miracle to rescue and save them,

instead of using their own powers to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Is the belief of such a doctrine *safe?* Nay, instead of being *safe*, it is perilous to men's souls, and should be avoided as the pestilence that walketh in darkness and wasteth at noon-day.

Let us now look at Universalism, and see if it has any better tendency. It clothes the divine character in all the beauty and excellence of a father's love. It echoes the voice of nature and revelation, in proclaiming that God is good unto all, and his tender mercies over all his works;* that as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities his erring offspring;† that he is kind to the unthankful and the evil;‡ that he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men;§ and that all the sufferings he sends upon men, are sent that they may become partakers in his holiness.‖

Now, what can be better calculated to attract and secure the affections of rational beings, than such a character as this, and thus secure obedience to the first great command? It is in perfect conformity with our highest ideas of excellence. It is not an effeminate kindness which yields the right and the true to its own weakness; but that kindness which is tempered with the dignity and energy of truth and right; which, while it pities and relieves, is

* Ps. 145 : 9. † Ps. 103 : 13. ‡ Luke 6 : 35.
§ Lam. 3 : 33. ‖ Heb. 10 : 12.

firm and unyielding in its attachments to justice and rectitude. If such a character will not call forth the admiration, the gratitude, the reverence, and the love of rational beings, nothing can. And then, if like begets like, how perfectly is it adapted to the formation of precisely such a character in man, as the gospel demands! It is itself the perfection of what the religion of Jesus designs to make man; and if it begets its own image in the human soul, man will be precisely what the Scriptures represent as securing God's approbation.

And then, in regard to man, Universalism teaches such views of his nature, as are calculated to secure a compliance with the second great commandment. Like the Scriptures, it represents that all men are made of one blood,* and have the same Father;† that all have the same germ of immortality, destined to bloom in unfading beauty;‡ that all are fed by the same munificent hand;§ upheld by the same kind providence;‖ dependent upon the same goodness both for time and eternity;¶ that all are destined to the same final home, and the participation of the same joys forever.** It calls upon men to love God, because he first loves them;†† to love mankind, because he loves them, and sent his son to die for their redemption;‡‡ and because "there

* Acts 17 : 26. † Mal. 2 : 10. ‡ 1 Tim. 4 : 10.
§ Acts 17 : 25. ‖ Ps. 145 : 14. ¶ Tit. 3 : 5.
** Eccl. 2 : 14. †† 1 John 4 : 19.
‡‡ 1 Thes. 5 : 10. 2 Cor. 5 : 14.

is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance."*

If we look upon our race in such a light as this, we can discover something in every individual, however much it may be obscured by sin, worthy of our affections. However much the fine gold may become dimmed, or deeply it may be buried in earth or dross, it is gold still. Its nature remains unchanged. With such views, whenever we see the form of a man, however much it may be marred and disfigured by intemperance and sin, we know the principles and elements of a man are still there. We know he has a nature like our own, susceptible of the same improvement and elevation. We know he is a brother, a child of the same Father. He has fallen among robbers, who have stripped him of his dignity and glory, and left him half dead. Only let him be washed and cleansed, and his wounds and bruises healed, and he will again stand forth a man, made in God's own image.

What can be better calculated to secure obedience to the second great commandment, than such views as these? What can be better calculated to awaken an interest in men for each other, and secure those kind and generous sympathies, demanded by the Saviour? How can any man entertain such views, if they are active principles

* Luke 15 : 7.

in his soul, without being inspired with new interest in his race, and being led to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the sick and imprisoned? It is impossible. And these are the very characteristics for which men are approved and blessed, by our religion, and for the want of which they are condemned and punished.

And now I put the question to every serious and reflecting mind—which of these doctrines, in your sober and candid judgment, is the best calculated to form such a character as the gospel demands; the doctrine of endless misery, with its appalling views of God's character, and its dark and repulsive views of human nature, or Universalism, with its high conceptions of the Divine character, so congenial with our highest notions and most exalted conceptions of greatness and goodness, and its interesting and lovely representations of man's nature? Which addresses itself the most strongly to our reason and conscience, and is the best adapted to call forth those feelings, and induce the formation of that character, which the Bible demands? Which is the best adapted to the production of those amiable and kind sentiments and feelings required of the Christian, so far as it may exert any influence over human character?

There can be but one answer from any intelligent, reflecting and candid person. Such a person must not only see, but feel, that Universalism, so far

as it exerts any influence over the minds, hearts and lives of men, is the best calculated to form that generous, disinterested and amiable character Christianity requires. This position might be verified by an appeal to facts, as they lie about us in society. But it is unnecessary.

Suppose we admit then, for the sake of the argument, that men's eternal state will be determined by the character they form in this life, and which they are found to sustain at the judgment, and that such a character is necessary to secure the approbation and blessing of the Most High, as is described in the texts quoted on a previous page; which doctrine is the *safest* to believe, were belief a matter of choice? Plainly and obviously Universalism. Why? Simply because it has the most powerful tendency to secure those virtues which Heaven approves and blesses.

With all this before us, we must conclude that the doctrine of endless misery is an exceedingly *unsafe* doctrine to be believed, even if it is true; for it not only brings ruin upon men's moral interests, and destruction to their happiness here, but by its unfavorable influences, jeopardizes their eternal happiness hereafter.

The truth is, so far as belief is concerned, man's only *safety* lies in his seeking to attain those views of the Divine character, and of human nature, calculated to exert the most healthful moral influences

over his mind and heart. And I think it has been shown, that Universalism is the belief, which affords these influences, in a degree far above its opposite, leaving the question of its truth unsettled. If such be the case, it must be the *safest* to adopt, even though it prove false. But to suppose a doctrine capable of exerting such an influence *false*, is a very great absurdity. It would be maintaining, that the influence of *falsehood*, is better than that of *truth*. The fact is, the very circumstance, that Universalism has this superior moral tendency, is a very powerful argument for its truth.

In the light of all this, I submit to the reader to determine how much truth there is in the following remarks :—"If Universalists are in the right, we who believe in a doctrine very different from theirs, are nevertheless just as safe as they. We need not concern ourselves to examine whether we are in the right or in the wrong as to opinion, since there can be no difference in the result."*

* Stuart's Exeget. Ess., p. 151—2. It is truly humiliating to see such remarks as these, from such a source ; for it betrays a state of mind, little in accordance with what we have a right to expect.

SECTION III.—CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES INCOMPETENT TEACHERS.

"I fear to embrace the doctrine of universal salvation, because it would oblige me to regard Christ and his Apostles as incompetent or dishonest teachers of religion, and the Bible itself as fitted and designed to lead men into error.*

This objection is founded upon the idea, "that the Christian Scriptures were written for the express purpose of teaching the salvation of all men;† "that, by himself or his apostles, Jesus Christ opposed every essential religious error of his age and country, in the most explicit, direct and positive terms;"‡ and consequently, "the doctrine of universal salvation, if it were true, being a doctrine never before heard of, he would have formally, fully, and repeatedly announced, explained, and enforced it."§

Now the idea here set forth, is most manifestly false, and is one which no well-informed, serious and candid mind ever entertained, among the believers of Universalism. Had it have been the purpose of the writers of the New Testament, to have explained and enforced a system of dogmatic theology, no one can doubt, that every point would

* Tract, No. 224, p. 2. † Do. p. 3.
‡ Royce's Lectures, p. 34. § Do. p. 35.

have been so clearly defined and unequivocally expressed, that there should have been no room for mistake, among serious and candid people. Had such have been their design, there would have been as little room for misapprehension as to the doctrines taught in the Bible, as there is in reference to those contained in the Westminster Catechism, or the Cambridge and Saybrook Platform. But it is not so. It is not true either that Christ or the apostles directly opposed "every essential religious error of his age and country;" or that the New Testament was "written for the express purpose of teaching the salvation of all men," nor indeed any other *one* doctrine. They had higher aims and ends in view, than to establish a dry and barren system of dogmatic theology—*to teach men how they might attain their own salvation.*

The truth is, there were many errors which prevailed in the age and country in which Jesus and his apostles lived, and very serious ones too, even in theology, with which they have not meddled. I will name but one—the doctrine of man's existence after the dissolution of the material body—the *manner* of attaining it. The common doctrine of the Jews of those times, who believed in future existence at all, was that of the transmigration of souls. Hence an eminent writer says, "that this Pythagorian dogma was become pretty general among the Jews, appears from some passages in

the gospels."* That this was an error, no one in a Christian land doubts, and what was the course of Christ and his apostles in reference to it? Did they oppose it in direct and explicit terms, even in a single instance? No. So far from correcting this error, they adopted the very same word† to represent a future existence for man, as was commonly used by the Jews, for this purpose. Indeed, one apostle goes so far as to declare—"I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, of the hope of the *resurrection*† of the dead I am called in question."‡ "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a *resurrection*† of the dead, both of the just and unjust."§ Why this course, in regard to this error, when Jesus corrected another error‖ held in connexion with the doctrine of future existence? Shall we infer from this, that "Christ and his apostles were incompetent or dishonest teachers of religion, and the Bible itself fitted and designed to lead men into error?"

* Campbell's Four Gospels, Prelim. Dissertations, Dis. VI., Pt. 2, § 19. See also Dr. A. Clarke's Com. on John 9: 2. Also Whitby, Barnes, and Livermore *in loco*.

† '*Ανάστασις* "denotes simply, being raised from inactivity to action, or from obscurity to eminence, or a return to such a state, after an interruption. . . . In this view, when applied to the dead, the word denotes, properly, no more than a *renewal* of *life*, to them, in whatever manner this may happen."—*Campbell's Note on Matt.* 22: 23.

‡ Acts 23: 6. § Do. 24: 15.

‖ That is, the idea that the same relations exist in a future state as in this. Matt. 22: 30.

The fact is, the Bible was not written for the express purpose of teaching Universalism or any other *ism;* but to inculcate great and universal principles*—principles which lay at the foundation of all theoretical religious truth; to renovate and correct the spirit and tendencies of that age; to explain the *way* of salvation; and to introduce men into the kingdom of heaven. Hence they left all errors to be corrected by the silent influences of these great principles, except such as interposed a barrier to the reception of these principles, and the attainment of those great ends. Hence many and very great errors were permitted to pass unnoticed by them.†

Making out a system of belief from the Bible, is precisely like an attempt to determine an individual's belief, upon all points in theology, from a volume made up of letters, poetry, biography, sketches of discourses, and conversations on practical and experimental religion. Here and there we shall find his views expressed upon some one or more

* "Jesus seized those fundamental principles which were current among his countrymen, discarded everything which had merely a local, civil or national reference; selected the purely moral, refined and elevated it to its true dignity, and rendered it complete by supplying its deficiencies."—*Hug's Intro. to N. T.*, p. 11. *Andover*, 1836.

† Among these may be named demoniacal possessions, and the supernatural influences of Python, a heathen god. Acts 16: 16, where a girl is said to be possessed with *πνεῦμα Πύθωνος, a spirit of Python.*

doctrinal point, as the foundation or stimulant to some duty, or to correct the error of some one with whom he might be conversing. By picking out and bringing together these scattered fragments, we may be able to make out his system of theology. So with the Bible. A system of doctrines is nowhere formally stated and discussed. Hence the great diversity of opinions for which the Bible is made responsible, while all are equally honest. One man sees one part, and another a different part. One individual looks at a statement from one point of view, and another views the same thing from a different position, and consequently comes to a different, and it may be a widely different, conclusion.

From the statements and reasoning already presented, it is sufficiently manifest, that the idea upon which the objection is founded, is incorrect, and of course the objection is without force, and we might leave it here; but there are several other considerations, which I wish to have observed; and to this end all that has been said may pass as irrelevant.

1. *This objection lies with far greater force against Christianity itself, than it does against Universalism.*

Let any one take the Old Testament and read the representations of the character and dignity of the promised Messiah, as portrayed by the Hebrew bards, by whom he is represented as a great king, and a mighty conqueror, going forth and subduing

nations and kingdoms, and bringing them under his dominion. With these glowing descriptions before him, let him look at the individual who came among the Jews, claiming to be the Messiah, and which we Christians believe to be such, as he is represented by his own friends; and what is there in his appearance or doings, to answer to those glowing descriptions? He had no hereditary titles, power or authority. He was a humble mechanic, clad in the common apparel of his profession, and wandering about his native country, attended by a few individuals, as humble in their pretensions as himself, called from the publican's seat, and their fishing nets, without a place where to lay their heads! Instead of being surrounded with the pomp and splendor of courts, and engaged in raising and appointing armies, he was dining at the publican's table, or standing on a vessel's deck, surrounded with the degraded and outcast of society, instructing their ignorance, healing their diseases, reclaiming them from their vices, and telling them to go and sin no more; comforting the afflicted, encouraging the desponding, and restoring the maniac to soundness of mind, while he hurled the most terrible denunciations at those who were supposed to be the only suitable associates of so distinguished a personage. We can hardly conceive of a character more entirely opposite to that described by the prophets, when those descriptions are taken

literally, than was that of Jesus. Might not a pious Jew, with his hands upon the books of the prophets, exclaim with far greater force and propriety, "I fear to believe this man the Messiah, because it would oblige me to regard Moses and the prophets, as incompetent or dishonest teachers of religion, and the Bible itself as fitted and designed to lead men into error?" It is even so; and this was the very ground, upon which the Jews rejected Jesus. Let the objector see to it, that he does not fall into the same condemnation!

2. *This objection lays with far greater force against some of the distinguishing features of Protestantism, than it does against Universalism.*

I will notice but one instance, and that is the doctrine, that the elements used in the Lord's Supper, by consecration, are transmuted into the real, veritable, *bona fide* flesh and blood of Jesus. The following language certainly comes much nearer expressing this idea in unequivocal terms, than anything in the Bible does the doctrine of endless misery. "Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave it to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them; and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many."* "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily,

* Mark 14: 22, 25.

verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the FLESH of the Son of Man, and drink his BLOOD, ye have no life in you."* With such language as this before him, may not the Catholic, with his hands upon the Gospels, exclaim—"I fear to embrace Protestantism, because it would oblige me to regard Christ and his apostles as incompetent or dishonest teachers of religion, and the Bible itself fitted and designed to lead men into error?" Most assuredly he might; and that too, with much more propriety than the objection under consideration was uttered.

Thus it will be seen, that admitting all the objection assumes, it is without force, because it proves more than those who urge it will admit. The truth is, it is no objection to any doctrine, that men have heretofore failed to discover it. The true question is not, whether men have failed to discover any fact in times past, but whether it *now* can be *proved* to be a *fact*. The learned and the unlearned, the wise and the ignorant, the philosopher and the plough-boy, the sage and the savage, had seen apples fall to the ground for near six thousand years, and yet not one of them ever read in that simple phenomenon, the great law of gravitation. But their blindness to so obvious a thing, does not weigh much against the discovery of Newton. So men have read and studied the Scriptures for many centuries; but it would be nothing marvellous, if

* John 6: 53.

they have not *yet* discovered *all* the truth they contain; nor is it any objection to any new truth, men may imagine they discover, that it has not been seen before. The true question is—*Is it sustained by competent and unimpeachable testimony?*

So in regard to Universalism. It is no objection to its truth, that so few, comparatively, have discovered it; or that Universalists have been men of inferior learning, talents and piety; for it is sometimes the case, and it may be so in ours, that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence;"* and that, as in another case, "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called."† Still, to show that Universalists are not quite so contemptible, ignorant and obscure as they are sometimes represented, I may be pardoned if I name a few both in the past and the present; such as Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen, two of the most influential and learned men among the early Christians. They were teachers in the Alexandrian school, and stood at its head. This school, which was the most celebrated and exerted more

* 1 Cor. 1: 27—29. † Do. 1: 26.

than any other, was distinguished, among other things, for its Universalism.* In more modern times, I may name Bishop Newton, Archbishop Tillotson, Dr. Jebb, Dr. Priestley, John Frederic Oberlin, Elhanan Winchester, Dr. Rush, and others too numerous to mention. To say nothing of those in our own country, who hold this doctrine; it is admitted even at Andover, that in Germany, "it has been fashionable among the more popular German divines to disbelieve" the doctrine of eternal punishment; and that even Tholuc himself, whom they have labored so hard to clear of all suspicion of heresy upon this subject, "says even of the evangelical theologians, *a good number of them cherish a hope of a final conversion of all men.*"† Are all these men persons of inferior talents, learning and piety? Nay, they are among the most eminent men, the religious world has ever produced.‡

* Giesler's Eccl. Hist., Period 1, Div. 111, Chap. 3, § 60 and 61.

† German Selections, p. 217.

‡ Dr. Murdock says of Origen: "Against the more learned pagans and the heretics of those times, he was a champion who had no equal; he was also considered a devout Christian, and was, beyond question, the first biblical scholar of the age. His winning eloquence, his great learning, his amiable temper, his reputation for sincere and ardent piety, gave him immense influence, especially among the higher classes in society. No man, since the apostles, had been more indefatigable, and no one had done more to diffuse knowledge and make the Christian community intelligent, united, and respectable in the view of mankind."—*Translation of Mosheim's Eccl. Hist.*, Vol. 1. pp. 204—6, Note 9. *New Haven*, 1832.

That Universalism has not been more generally received in the Christian Church, or that we hear so little of it from the sixth century until the Reformation in the sixteenth century, is not very wonderful; and it is to be attributed to very different causes, than that of the want of testimony in its favor in the Scriptures. During this period, which has been justly termed "the dark ages," the theology of the church was drawn from any source, but the Bible; for hardly one in a thousand of her clergy, ever saw a copy of the Scriptures, and if they had, it was of no use to them, because they could not read a word in them, such was their deplorable ignorance. Beside, every one who dared to depart from the received doctrines, was sure to be hunted down, and his voice silenced by fire and sword. Still, that Universalism had its advocates even in these days of darkness, and this period of the reign of terror and sin, is sufficiently manifest from the proceedings of ecclesiastical councils at different periods.*

If there is anything strange about the matter, it is that Universalism has had so *many* advocates as it has. The fact is, the vices, the passions and the selfish interests of the world, are, and ever have been, and ever will be arrayed against this doctrine; and humiliating as may be the fact, nevertheless, a

* Ancient History of Universalism, p. 301, et seq. Appendix.

fact it is, that comparatively few persons have the moral courage to rise up in rebellion to public opinion, and jeopardize their reputations, their fortunes, their lives—their *all*, by an avowal of an obnoxious truth. Most men had rather remain moored amid the fogs of error, however pestilential they may be, than to launch forth upon the sea of inquiry, even with the Bible for a chart and compass. And this disposition is but too much encouraged, by not a few, who hold the responsible office of religious teachers.

That it is such influences, not the plainness with which its opposite is revealed in the Scriptures, that has prevented the more general diffusion and adoption of Universalism, is manifest from the actual history of the matter. In the earlier ages of the church, while the Scriptures were freely circulated among the people, and generally read and studied by the clergy, Universalism showed itself, and at the period when the greatest attention was paid to this matter, and there were the greatest number of biblical scholars and critics, then it prevailed the most widely, and numbered among its advocates the most eminent and distinguished scholars in the church. But when less attention was given to the study of the Scriptures, and Christians gave themselves to strife and contention, Universalism began to decline; and just in proportion to the *neglect* of the Bible, and the departure of the church from the

spirit of Christ, did Universalism disappear, until, when the Bible was entirely abandoned, and the church given up to ignorance, stupidity and sin, it totally disappeared, amid the worse than Egyptian darkness that prevailed.

When the reformation in the sixteenth century broke out, and men were once more admitted to the sacred pages, to read and understand them according to the dictates of their own judgments, immediately believers and advocates of Universalism, sprang up in all directions. And just in proportion to the degree of attention given to the study of the Bible in every period since, has this doctrine prevailed. As the one has advanced and receded, so has the other, until the present time, distinguished above all others, for its wonderful activity of mind, its freedom of inquiry, and its diligent, patient and laborious research, and now a greater proportion of professing Christians entertain this doctrine, than at any period since the days of Origen. With those who hail under the name of Universalists, may be reckoned almost the entire Unitarian denomination, both in this country and Europe, together with immense numbers of the members of all the various Protestant sects, as believers in this beautiful doctrine.

The same fact appears, when we compare different countries with each other, and one section of the same country with another. For example;

take Germany, which has been well pronounced a land of scholars, and where biblical science has received more attention, than anywhere else under heaven, and there Universalism prevails more widely and enrolls more eminent names among its friends than in any other country. Then take the United States, which undoubtedly stands next to Germany in its activity of mind, the diligent industry and perseverance of its scholars, and the freedom of inquiry, and the attention to religious subjects, and the same phenomenon appears. A comparison of the different sections of this country, will afford evidence to the same point. A comparison of New England, where the greatest attention has been paid to the reading and study of the Scriptures of any section, with the Middle and Western States, and of all these with the Southern States, goes to establish my position; for in the first named section, are the greatest numbers of Universalists, in proportion to the population; in the next, where there is and ever has been less attention to religious inquiry, the number is less who embrace this doctrine; and in the last, where there is little or no attention to these matters, there is an absolute dearth of Universalism. It might also be remarked, that the prevalence of this doctrine, bears a singular and striking proportion, to the degree of purity and elevation in public morals. Where public morals are the most pure and elevated, and the most intel-

lectual cultivation exists, there Universalism prevails the most widely; and where there is the most ignorance, and public morals the most debased, there it is almost, if not entirely, shut out.

Now if there is such an entire absence of proof in favor of Universalism in the Bible, that the man who embraces it, "must regard Christ and his apostles as incompetent or dishonest teachers of religion, and the Bible itself as fitted and designed to lead men into error," how are we to explain these undeniable and palpable facts? Why is it, that Universalism has ever had a prevalence, just in proportion to the degree of attention given to the study of the Scriptures, the elevation of public morals, and the freedom of inquiry and toleration enjoyed? How happens it, that some of the most distinguished men, profound scholars, eminent biblical critics, and deeply religious and devout Christians, in every age and country, where any tolerable degree of interest exists in religious inquiry, and freedom and toleration is indulged and allowed, have been and now are Universalists? This is a problem I shall leave those who make the objection under consideration, to solve.

And beside, why are those who now believe the doctrine of endless punishment so much afraid of having people hear Universalism discussed, if it so manifestly unscriptural? Do not the following remarks upon the Reformation explain it? "As to

the majority of those whose souls were terrified at the thought of relinquishing a wonted and revered conviction, they no longer had it the moment they feared they should lose it. That they believed they had, and maintained the pretension, made the case no better; for the deception could not last long." *

SECTION IV.—WHY DID THE PREACHING OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES ALARM THE FEARS AND AWAKEN THE ENMITY OF WICKED MEN?

"If Christ and his Apostles believed and taught the salvation of all men, it seems impossible to account for the fact, that their preaching so much alarmed the fears and awakened the enmity of wicked men."†

It is unquestioned and unquestionable, that such an effect was produced, by the preaching of Christ and his Apostles. And when it is asked, "Were any such effects ever known to be produced by the preaching of Universalists?"‡ I am constrained to answer in the affirmative. So when it is asked, "Did you ever know any wicked man, any profane swearer, Sabbath-breaker, drunkard, infidel, or despiser of sacred things, displeased at hearing this doctrine? I must answer, only in a few instances, and that when they were raging with passion against some fellow-creature. At other times, when

* Biblical Repository, Vol. 9., p. 340, April, 1837.
† Tract 224, p. 5. ‡ Tract 224, p. 6.

the better principles and feelings of human nature predominate, they are always pleased with the idea this doctrine presents. Indeed, I cannot conceive how any mind, under the dominion of pure, benevolent and generous principles and feelings, can be any other than pleased with it. It is only those raging with passion against some one, the sour-hearted, selfish, malicious and hating bigot, that can be offended with the doctrine. It harmonizes with the highest and holiest impulses of all other hearts; and of this its friends and believers have great reason to be proud. It is its honor and glory.

I know, indeed, that arguing the single point of the salvation of all men, is not peculiarly calculated to convict men of sin and bring them to repentance. But this is no truer of Universalism, than it is of every other *ism* under heaven. Every sect holds more or less doctrines, the inculcation and defence of which, cannot, from the very nature of the case, secure any of these effects, however important and salutary they may be, when taken in connexion with the system they hold. For example, take the system of the objector, which includes the doctrines of the trinity, vicarious atonement, total native depravity, and the final perseverance of the saints, and I ask what salutary moral influence is their inculcation and defence calculated to produce? Who ever heard of any compunctions of conscience being produced; any sense of guilt and shame excited; any awakening of the

moral senses to be secured; any harrowing up of the soul with remorse and fear; or the formation of any holy resolves, in a wicked man, or any sinner led to repentance, by arguing any of these doctrines? No one will pretend this. Hence, if this circumstance is anything against Universalism, or goes to show, that it is inconsistent with the teachings of Christ and his Apostles, it proves the same thing in regard to a misnamed Orthodoxy.

The objection under consideration proceeds upon the presumption, that the Universalist pulpit has, and can have, no other employment, than arguing the solitary doctrine of universal salvation; a presumption that is utterly unfounded and false. That the ministry of this denomination may have given an undue share of attention to the inculcation and defence of this one idea, I am not disposed to deny. But I do deny, that they have sinned any more, in this respect, than their contemporaries of other sects. To represent that they are limited, in their pulpit ministrations, to one point of doctrine, or that, because they may have given an undue degree of time and attention to the proof of their distinguishing article of belief, nothing else is heard from them, is as unjust, false and slanderous a representation, as it would be to describe the ministrations of the Baptist pulpit as limited to the defence of *immersion* alone as baptism; or those of the Pedo-Baptists, as given merely to the defence of *infant baptism*. This

would be *as true* of these last cases, as is the intimation in regard to the former. All of them, at times, have erred in the course they have pursued. They have proclaimed their peculiarities, to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law, "judgment, mercy and faith." And if these last are excusable for their error, in reference to mere *non-essentials*, surely Universalists *ought* to be, for their mistakes, when the matter involved, relates to man's eternal destiny, the essential character of the eternal God, and fundamentally affects the whole system of theology.

In regard to the actual effects produced by the Universalist pulpit, I must say, and upon this matter I can speak advisedly, that no pulpits in the land more frequently displease the profane swearer, the Sabbath-breaker, the drunkard, the infidel, and the despiser of sacred things, than those of this denomination. No pulpits speak out more distinctly, boldly and fearlessly against these and all other vices. I can truly say, I have heard some of the most pointed, faithful and earnest rebukes of the prevalent vices of society, from the ministers of this faith, to which I have ever listened. And no ministers are more frequently made to suffer in their reputations and interests, from the malicious slanders, abuse and falsehoods of the unprincipled and wicked, or pursued with more unrelenting fury and perseverance, by the profane swearer, the Sabbath-breaker, the drunkard, the infidel, and the despisers of sacred

things, and all whose hearts are fully set on doing evil. They stand between two fires,—that of these characters, and that of the sanctimonious and bigoted hypocrite,

> "Who steals the livery of the court of heaven,
> To serve the devil in."——

It is true, that "Christ rarely preached a sermon, which did not excite uneasiness in the minds of sinners, and send them away dissatisfied and murmuring against the preacher. The same is true of the apostles."* "But who were the wicked men whose fears and enmity were excited? Who were these sinners who went away dissatisfied and murmuring?"† It was not "the worldly and gay, the impenitent and prayerless;"‡ but the professedly religious, praying, Sabbath-keeping people, whom he compared to whited sepulchres, whose outward appearance was beautiful, while within they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity;§ pious rulers and Pharisees, who thought themselves righteous and despised others.‖ It was such persons as these, whom Jesus told, "the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you;"¶ men thoroughly bent upon doing evil, who were offended at the preaching of Christ and his apostles, and persecuted them from city to city. But it was not so with the multitude

* Tract 224, p. 5.
† Reply to Tract 224, p. 13.
‡ Tract 224, p. 6.
§ Matt. 23 : 27.
‖ Luke 18 : 9.
¶ Matt. 21 : 31.

that sinned through ignorance,* for "the common people heard him gladly,"† and wondered at the *gracious* words that he uttered.‡ Those who were pronounced "cursed,"§ publicans and sinners,‖ and the like, were never offended at his preaching, although he rebuked their sins in the most plain and affectionate, and earnest manner. Such persons were his principal friends and patrons. Hence he was denounced as the friend of publicans and sinners; sneered and scoffed at as a Sabbath-breaker;¶

* There are some persons who are vicious and depraved, that are disposed to think, because the denunciations of Christ are levelled against *hypocritical* sinners, that a man is quite excusable for his abominations, if they are committed openly and above-board, without any attempt to conceal them, under a mask of goodness. So also there are those who seem to think a minister must not preach in a way that will give offence to any open, undisguised and shameless sinner, no matter how degraded; and that he is utterly unpardonable in so doing, because publicans and sinners did not become offended at Christ's preaching. But both are sadly deceived. If a man wilfully and knowingly lives in habits of vice and wrong, he is equally guilty, whether he commits his deeds of wickedness in the face of heaven and earth, with a shameless impudence and indifference to all consequences, or endeavors to conceal them under a mask of goodness and virtue. In truth, the former shows a deeper depravity than the latter. Beside, no mortal can rebuke and expose a vice, even with an angel's voice of sweetness and love, without offending those whose hearts are *fully set upon doing* evil; while ignorant offenders will take no offence. And this is the precise reason for the different course pursued toward, and the treatment Christ received from, the Pharisees and publicans and sinners.

† Mark 12 : 37.
‡ Luke 4 : 22.
§ John 7 : 49.
‖ Matt. 9 : 11.
¶ Mark 2 : 27. Luke 13 : 14.

a glutton and a wine-bibber;* and rejected as a blasphemer,† a deceiver of the people,‡ on whom none of the rulers or the Pharisees had believed.§ It was such persons as these who were the most offended at the preaching of Christ, expressed the "deepest abhorrence" ‖ of him, and finally procured his death. They were offended because he would not permit them to go on in their sins undisturbed by exposure and rebuke; and this result will always follow such a course, upon all whose hearts are fully set upon doing evil, regardless of all consequences, whether they be open, undisguised and shameless, or hypocritical sinners, be the teacher a Universalist or anything else.

* Matt. 11 : 19. Luke 7 : 34.
† Matt. 9 : 3.
‡ Matt. 27 : 63. John 7 : 12.
§ John 7 : 48.
‖ Tract 224, p. 7.

SECTION V.—UNIVERSALISM INCONSISTENT WITH THE CHARACTER OF GOD AS A REWARDER.

"The doctrine of universal salvation is inconsistent with the character of God as a rewarder, and with the great truth, that men are now in a state of probation. . . . . If Universalism is true, God is not a righteous moral governor; he makes no public and visible distinction between those who serve him, and those who serve him not; but is an indifferent spectator of the conduct of men; neither loving holiness nor hating sin; neither rewarding the righteous, nor punishing the wicked." *

The main positions here stated, as well as the collateral ideas involved, must strike every well-disciplined mind, as both singular and extraordinary. It is, in effect, maintaining that there is no such thing as rewards and punishments, under the Divine government, unless they are infinite in measure and endless in duration; for the precise difference between the believer in endless punishment and the Universalist, is simply in relation to the character, objects and duration of the rewards and punishments for men's doings in this life—the Universalist maintaining, that they are *means* and of course limited, so far, at least, as individual actions are concerned, or the aggregate of any number are concerned; while the believer in the doctrine of endless misery holds them to be *ends* and unlimited in duration. The position is as if one should

* Tract 224, pp. 10, 11.

maintain, that all the penalties attached to the penal code of a statute, were no punishments for crime, except such as are *capital;* than which a greater absurdity could not be maintained.

So in regard to the matter of probation, which I suppose means *trial*, I have but a few words to say. If I understand this doctrine as commonly held, I regard it as equally inconsistent with the *Bible* as with Universalism. I cannot regard this as a state, where men are neither rewarded or punished, and the next one where there is *nothing* but rewards and punishments. As for this state, it is not so, if the Bible is true, or any reliance is to be placed upon human observation and experience; and surely it will be difficult to make out, from the Scriptures or otherwise, that the future is purely and solely a state of rewards and punishments, for human doings in this world. I have been accustomed to think, and certainly the most obvious appearance upon the face of the Scriptures, and the actual state of things as presented to human experience and observation, confirm the impression,—that this state of existence is quite as much a condition of *discipline* as of *trial;* for most assuredly, men are in some degree at least, if not fully, rewarded and punished here for their doings. And in regard to a future state, it may well be asked, if it is *entirely* a state of retribution upon the present, how and when are men to be rewarded and punished for

their doings in *that* state? for I suppose they will be *active* beings there, as well as here. For one, although I can understand how men may be rewarded and punished in the future life, and thus that life be a retribution upon the present, so that they may be rewarded according to their works done here, I *cannot* understand how it can be so, when man's whole existence is taken into the account, upon the supposition that this retribution is endless. For there is the whole of their doings through that endless retribution, for which no retribution is provided,* unless, indeed, we suppose the human soul in the world of spirits, is converted into a thing as passive and inert as the stones in the fields, or the clods of the valley. This I am not aware that any one will admit.

The truth is, no state into which a human being

* "There is no way by which this conclusion can be evaded, but by supposing, that men and devils in hell are incapable of sinning, or that the sins which they commit there, do not incur any additional punishment. But neither of these positions can be maintained. That men whose nature is sinful, and who by long custom have formed inveterate habits of sinning, when removed to another world, should cease to commit sin, is an unreasonable supposition; and to suppose that sin, in a future state, does not incur the curse of the law or the displeasure of God, is equally unreasonable. God, from the holiness of his nature, must hate sin wherever it appears, and he always acts agreeably to his nature. To suppose men in hell divested of their moral agency, would be to suppose them in such a condition, as scarcely to be capable of suffering for their sins." Tract against Universalism, American Tract No. 350, p. 5.

can be transferred, can be simply and solely a state of retribution upon a past state, so long as man is an active and a morally accountable being; because, in such a case, he must be every moment, the subject of praise or blame, of reward or punishment, neither of which can he receive for his doings in a purely retributory state, which looks only to the past, if that state is of endless duration. And if man is not a morally accountable being in any state, he is not susceptible of reward or punishment, either for the past or the present, in that state. So that, if the common doctrine of probation is admitted, it "is inconsistent with the character of God as a rewarder," so far as relates to the future state, at least; and he "is an indifferent spectator of the conduct of men; neither loving holiness nor hating sin; neither rewarding the righteous, nor punishing the wicked."

But could it be made out, that God is a rewarder of men, in any sense, upon the hypothesis of endless punishment, it cannot be maintained for a moment, that he is an equitable rewarder of them; for to say nothing of the infinite disproportion between finite sins and an infinite punishment, there is great inequality, when viewed in its individual relations and bearings. There are all possible grades of character among men, varying from the worst to the best. And yet, according to the doctrine in question, mankind are to be divided

into two and only two classes, the one to be infinitely and endlessly rewarded, and the other infinitely and endlessly punished. In other words, those who have scarcely virtue enough to keep them out of hell, and those who have climbed to the highest point of excellence, are to be rewarded precisely alike; and that the man who has almost goodness enough to secure his admittance into heaven, and the blood-stained pirate and murderer are to share the same eternal state! This is truly *such* equity as the world knoweth not of!

The true state of the case, I take to be, that every state in which the human soul will ever exist, is a state of retribution, both on the present and the past, if past there is. An intimate relation subsists between the present and all the past. By our *present*, we make our *future;* and our *future* will be a retribution upon our past, no matter whether we are in this world or that which is to come; and at the same time it will be, in a very important sense, a retribution upon that present. In other words, our doings and their consequences go hand in hand, and at the same time reach back, and take hold of the *past*, as a cause, and forward, and take hold of the future in their consequences.

SECTION VI.—UNIVERSALISM INCONSISTENT WITH GOD'S MERCY.

"It denies the mercy of God, and sinks the grace of the gospel into an empty parade of high sounding words. It is asserted by Universalists, that the 'wicked receive a punishment proportioned to their crimes;' 'that all the hell there, is inevitably certain to the wicked;' that their sufferings 'ever will be in exact ratio to the measure and magnitude of sin.'" *

If Universalists err in maintaining such a doctrine as this, they certainly have very respectable authority for it, for surely, no doctrine stands out with greater distinctness and prominence, or is insisted on with greater emphasis, in the Scriptures, and particularly in the New Testament, than that men are to be rewarded according to their works. Its language is—"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man *according to* his *works*." † "But he that *doeth* wrong shall *receive* for the wrong which he hath *done;* and there is no *respect* of *persons*." ‡ So that, if Universalism is to be condemned for maintaining such an idea, the Bible must share the same fate

* Tract 224, p. 49.
† Matt. 16 : 27. Rom. 2 : 6. Rev. 20 : 13 ; 22 : 12.
‡ Col. 3 : 25.

In such company, Universalists are content to stand or fall.

Beside, it may be remarked, that this objection is the directly opposite of another one, we sometimes hear from the same quarter, viz., "that a God all mercy, is a God unjust;" and here we have it, "a God all justice, is a God unmerciful." Now both these objections originate from viewing the same idea from different positions, and under different aspects, and are founded upon the mistaken notion, that justice and mercy are two opposite and antagonistical principles, which cannot harmonize in the same person or being. And yet, the Bible everywhere maintains, that God is just and at the same time merciful.

I am free to confess, that if Universalists held with the objector, that punishment is merely and solely vindicatory, if not vindictive, that it is an *end;* and that a specific amount of punishment is to be inflicted for sin, and that too, without any reference to the good of the offender, this objection would be invested with great force and power. But believing as Universalists do, that punishment is a *means* in the hands of God, by which he aims to promote human good, and even that of the transgressor himself; that all divine retribution is parental in its character; that every man deserves and will receive so much, and so much punishment only, as will secure the great ends of all righteous retribution;

that the duration and the severity of that punishment, which each individual will receive, depends not so much upon the specific amount of wrong that he may have committed, as upon the depravity and perversity of his *heart*, and the perseverance with which he resists the demands of God's law, this objection is divested of all its force, and falls most harmless to the ground. Every candid and fair-minded man must see, that, under such a view, there is nothing unmerciful in causing men to suffer precisely according to their works, more than there is in an earthly parent's firmly subjecting his wayward and stubborn child to a system of discipline, of which punishment constitutes a part, until his stubbornness is subdued, and he is reclaimed from his waywardness. According to this view, justice and mercy act in perfect harmony, and both conspire to the same great end,—the highest and best good of all souls. And hence we read—"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."* "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth MERCY; *for* thou renderest to *every* man *according* to his *work*."†

* Ps. 85: 10. † Do. 62: 12.

SECTION VII.—GOD TREATS THE RIGHTEOUS WORSE THAN THE WICKED.

"Universalism represents God as often treating wicked men far better than he does the righteous. The wicked, it is said, do "not live out half their days." They die in the midst of their pilgrimage, and are taken directly to heaven; whilst the righteous are left to linger out, in this vale of tears, the full term of their earthly being, and arrive late at the kingdom of heaven." *

This objection is illustrated by a reference to several examples. It is said, "On this principle, how much more highly favored were the antediluvians than Noah! . . . . Lot, too, would have fared far better than he did, had he have been as wicked as the Sodomites. . . . . How unfortunate was it for Moses, that he belonged to the people of God, rather than the Egyptians! . . . . How much happier was Judas than the other apostles!" †

This objection is founded upon an entire misrepresentation of Universalism, as may be seen by a reference to the explanation on a previous page.‡ It proceeds upon the supposition, that Universalism is the belief that all men enter a state of perfect felicity *immediately after the death of the body.* But it is not so. Universalism is the belief that all men will become *righteous*, and in consequence *happy.* I know, indeed, that some Universalists hold to that idea; but it makes no part of Universalism. It is a

* Tract 224, pp. 49—50. † Ibid. ‡ pp. 8—13.

mere adjunct, an incidental idea, an occasional and unnecessary appendage.

With this correction, I might let the objection drop; but for the sake of the argument, I am willing to accept the objection as stated by the author, in its fullest force, and then I remark,

1. That most men of intelligence and virtue are in the habit of regarding this world as rather a pleasant dwelling-place to the virtuous and good, notwithstanding its labors, crosses and trials, instead of being so dark, dismal and wretched a place, that to live in it is a *curse*. With all its discomforts and offensive things, it is a state where the good enjoy vastly more than they suffer; and hence they are willing to remain here all their appointed days, and that, too, without regarding it a very severe punishment, even in the most unfavorable cases. At any rate, such people generally prefer to remain here the full measure of their days, rather than be hurried away by drowning, burning or hanging. Indeed, most sober and rational men regard the amount of happiness allotted to man and all other creatures, in this world, as so much overbalancing the misery they are necessitated to suffer, that it affords a very decisive testimony for divine goodness, even considered irrespective of another state.

2. I remark, that the whole point and force of this objection lies in the implied idea, that if a man is sure of going immediately to heaven at death, it

is desirable, so far as the individual himself is concerned, that he should be cut off from the earth as soon as possible, and so sent the earlier to heaven! that the man who should shoot, hang, drown or burn such an individual, would perform for him a most benevolent deed! Hence, the following extraordinary language is put into the mouth of one of the most bloody pirates that ever swung into heaven by a halter.* "I devoted my life to the simple and benevolent business of aiding my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, up to paradise, by the quickest and gentlest means!"†

Now it is maintained, that all true Christians are sure of going to heaven as soon as they are divested of this mortal body. This, I suppose, will be admitted on all hands. At any rate, it is very strenuously held to by those who urge the objection under consideration against Universalism. If, therefore, there is any force in this objection, it would be a blessing to such persons, should the government put them, as soon as they become Christians, into the hands of a public executioner, to be shot, hanged, drowned or

* Allusion is here had to the noted Gibbs, and to the circumstance of his being attended upon the gallows by a number of clergymen, who gave him and those who witnessed his execution, if my memory serves me right, the assurance, that they believed him fully prepared for heaven, into which they believed he would immediately enter! This is a common occurrence, if it was not so in that case. And yet these same men can hold up their hand in pious horror at Universalism, and denounce it as licentious in its tendency!!

† Tract 362, p. 8.

burned, that they might the *sooner* get to heaven! or should the Almighty send a flood and drown, or his thunder-bolts and blast them, and so take them home to himself! This is a way of blessing Christians, I am inclined to think, which would not be so much *coveted* by most people, as greatly to multiply the converts to Christianity; for I apprehend the greater part of our race are so stupid, that it would be very difficult to convince them, that it is a greater blessing to die an early and violent death—to be thrust out of the world by the hands of the public executioner or the visitations of the Almighty, even if they do get to heaven a little *earlier*, than to live to a good old age, die a natural death, in their own beds, surrounded by their friends, and in peace and hope, although it may bring them *late* to heaven!

Thus it will be seen, that this objection lies as much against every system of faith which maintains that *any man* will exist and be happy immediately after death, as against Universalism; and more so against those systems of belief which represent the path of the sinner, in this life, as strown with flowers, while that of the just is hedged up with thorns. If the good man has so painful a path to tread; if his joys are so few and his trials so many, that he would have no inducement to struggle against temptation and sin; to practise the self-denial required; and to perform the great duties of life, but for the assurance of eternal blessedness as his re-

ward; and if after all he may fall from grace and perish everlastingly, what more benevolent deed could be done, than to hasten them out of this miserable world as soon as they are in grace? And then how *unmerciful* is the Almighty, to doom them to such a fate, instead of taking them home to heaven!

3. We will now present a few examples from the Scriptures, as an offset to those named by the objector. "How much better did the Jews treat our Saviour and his followers, than their own children! Those, they sent early to heaven; these, they left to the intolerable curse of a long life! Herod showed a striking partiality towards the innocent babes of Bethlehem, by taking them off to heaven at one fell swoop, while their less indulgent mothers would have detained them upon earth,"* to drag out a miserable existence, and perhaps, go to hell at last!

SECTION VIII.—THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS FORGIVENESS.

"It is manifest that, upon this scheme, sinners can neither receive forgiveness through the blood of Christ, nor in any other way; for having suffered the proper penalty of the law, they have a right to deliverance on the footing of justice."†

This objection lies not merely against Universalism, but against every view of the divine govern-

* Reply to Dr. Hawes, p. 71. † Tract 362, p. 4.

ment, which maintains that the subjects of salvation are anywhere to be punished for their sins. For, if the infliction of punishment for sin, when applied to the subjects of salvation, is inconsistent with the doctrine of salvation by grace, then all such persons are exempted from all liability to punishment, however numerous and detestable their crimes, no matter whether the number saved be few or many. So that the objector must either give up this objection, or maintain that some sinners are in no danger of being punished for their sins.

The objection is founded, also, in entirely wrong conceptions of the views of Universalists, relative to the nature of punishment. It is based upon the idea that punishment, under the divine government, is merely vindicatory if not vindictive; that a specific amount of punishment is inflicted for a specific amount of wrong doing; that they regard punishment as merely and solely retrospective, only with an eye to the past, or as inflicted for no other reason than that the individual has sinned. It is only on this supposition, that the declaration could be made, that after "having suffered the proper penalty of the law, they have a *right* to deliverance on the footing of justice."

I need tell no one who is tolerably acquainted with the views of Universalists, that they entertain no such opinions. As has once before been re-

marked,* they do not believe that a specific amount of punishment is due for a specific amount of wrong and sin; but that every man deserves and that he will be punished until he reforms, and that when reformation is secured, each and every individual has been punished according to his deeds, however diverse the specific proportions, between the evil done and the misery suffered; for they regard all just and equitable punishment, under the moral government of God, as prospective—not looking so much at what is passed, as to what is to come; not inflicting pain so much because the individual has done wrong and sinned, as to prevent his doing so any more. It is one part of that great *system* of means which God has ordained, to reclaim the wayward children of men; but it is not the principal or the most efficient means of attaining this end. Of itself, it could not reclaim a single soul. It is only by its being attended by the grace of God, as manifested in the life, sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that punishment becomes an agent in the redemption and salvation of men. Without this, it might serve only to irritate, harden and render the individual more reckless and desperate in the way of sin and iniquity.

But while punishment is *prospective*, and looks mainly to the future for its object, pardon or forgiveness is mainly *retrospective*, and is granted

* In this work, above, pp. 86—7.

only on repentance. And the necessity of it lies in the circumstance, that although we may have been punished for our sins, and been exercised with the most deep and pungent sorrow for them, and most thoroughly reformed, yet all this does not make *amends* for the mischief our wrong acts may have done, nor remove the guilt we have incurred, from our souls. It is the office of pardon or forgiveness to accomplish this work, and place us before God as though we had never sinned, and as free from feelings of guilt, that we may begin the world anew, with new aims and object, new purposes and pursuits, and in a new course of life. Thus do punishment and forgiveness harmonize; thus it is, that all the world is guilty before God; and thus that no man can claim the blessedness of heaven, as a matter of right, a demand of justice. These principles apply to all worlds under the government of the Infinite Father; as truly to the present as the future, and to the future as to the present; for the laws of the Almighty are immutable and eternal. They are "without variableness or the shadow of turning," like his own nature.

SECTION IX.—THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE.

"Upon the supposition that this doctrine is true, repentance is useless; there is no need of religion of any kind; no connexion exists between religion and salvation." *

There is a recklessness of truth and a disregard of common sense, as well as of the repeated assertions of Universalists, about this objection, which hardly entitle it to a serious consideration. Still, it is so common an objection, and urged with such a wonderful pertinacity, from all quarters, and embraces so wide a range of subjects, that it may not be passed in silence, lest it should be supposed that it is unanswerable. It is an objection which not only applies to religion itself, but to all its appliances. It assumes, that if the doctrine of universal salvation is true, religion itself, worship, and all the rites and forms of religion are rendered entirely unnecessary, and utterly useless. In reply to this I remark,

1. That this objection is founded in the idea, that the *number* saved will render the *means* of salvation unnecessary. But I would like to know by what process of logic this is made out. How is it possible that the relative necessity of the use of the means of salvation, can be affected by the number to be saved? If certain means are necessary to

* Tract 350, pp. 22, 23.

effect the salvation of *one* man, are they not equally necessary to secure that of *all* other men; and if these means will attain salvation for *one* man, why will they not secure it for *all* men? So if religion and all its appliances are necessary to the attainment of *one* man's salvation, and they will secure it for him, why are they not equally necessary, and why may they not secure the salvation of *every* other man? It surely is so; and hence, whether there is but *one* man to be saved, or the *whole race*, cannot have any bearing upon the *necessity* of *means* and the *use* of those means, for the attainment of that end.

2. I remark, that this objection proceeds upon the assumption, that Universalists are so ignorant and stupid, as to deny all relation between *means* and *ends*, *cause* and *effect*. But I need not tell any man of a moderate share of intelligence, and who has taken any pains to inform himself, that they are not quite so foolish as this, and with their writings before him, it must have required an unusual share of impudence, and a most reckless hardihood in any man, to have deliberately written such a paragraph as that at the head of this section; for everywhere, in their books, must he have seen, that no writers ever kept more distinctly in view cause and effect, or more strenuously contended for the most intimate relation between means and ends.

The fact is, Universalists believe as much in the necessity of the use of *means* to secure salvation, as any other people. They regard faith and repentance as indispensable to its attainment, and as fully believe no man can be saved without their exercise, as any persons possibly can. No men are more thoroughly persuaded that no flesh can be saved, nor a single soul exalted to heaven, without the use of the appropriate *means* furnished by divine grace—the use of religion and all its appliances—the exercise of faith and repentance, the fruit of religion, than are all serious and reflecting Universalists. Were this not the case, why should they erect churches at so great cost, and sometimes sacrifice of time and means, maintain the preaching of the word and all the ordinances of religion in those churches, and endow and maintain Sabbath Schools? Their very doings, known and read of all men, are proof enough, in the absence of all other, that they so regard the matter.

I know, indeed, that men of shallow brains and corrupt hearts may, and undoubtedly have perverted and abused this doctrine, to its disgrace and scandal, and their own destruction, as they have every other good thing. But Universalists are not alone in being cursed and scourged with such hangers-on, nor with having a peculiarity of their faith held in unrighteousness, or used for base and unworthy purposes, as the writings and experience of all sects prove.

The precise difference between those who hold to a numerically limited, and those who believe in universal salvation, is, that these last believe, that the means of salvation ordained of Heaven, shall be universally efficient, while the former hold they will be but partially so. In other words, Universalists believe, that it is by all men being led to the exercise of faith and repentance, through the influence of religion, the sanctification of their hearts and lives, and the pardon obtained through Jesus Christ, that all souls are to be saved and exalted to everlasting blessedness. They hold that the *means* which will redeem, save, and render eternally happy *one* soul, will redeem, save, and render everlastingly blessed *all* souls.

But was it, as some Universalists hold, that there is no connexion between the present conduct of men and their future condition, still religion would be of great consequence to mankind. Even blot out the idea of a future existence, and suppose this world is the *ultima thule*, the utmost bound of human existence; that the dissolution of the mortal body is the utter and everlasting extinction of the entire man, of the *me*, as the Transcendentalists would say, and is religion of no value or importance to man? However much such views may lessen its value and importance, I maintain, it is of immense value for the promotion of the *present* interests and happiness of mankind, both in their

individual and social relations, in *this* world. To maintain, that all the value and importance of religion consists in its affording the means of escape from the flames of hell, is to degrade it quite as much as to maintain, that it will exert no influence extending beyond this short life, this preface, this introduction to our being. The former converts religion into a mere article of merchandize, while the latter, if the worst is said of it that can be, merely ascribes to it an influence much more limited than it really exerts.

Our view is neither the one nor the other of these. I cannot regard religion, or the exercise of faith and repentance, or the observance of its rites and forms, a mere device to escape everlasting perdition. This is a low and unworthy view of its nature and objects. Nor can I consider it as exerting so narrow and limited an influence as some imagine, although I should agree with them, as to the nature, character and the objects of that influence, so far as they extend. But they confine them within too narrow limits—limits which greatly diminish the necessity and importance of the exercise of faith and repentance, and the observance of the rites and forms of religion. My view is that all these things contribute to the formation of *character*, and that the character we form here will determine our *condition* upon our *entrance* into the world of spirits; which condition can be changed only by a

change of the character. It is that ultimate result of the habits of thought, feeling and action upon the soul itself, which we call character, not the external circumstances of the individual, that determines the essential happiness or misery of every human being, no matter where they are—whether in this world or in the future.

SECTION X.—UNIVERSALISM NOT NEEDED BY THE TRUE CHRISTIAN.

"It cannot be concealed, and perhaps will not be denied, that the primary motive which has led men to Universalism, is the desire of removing from the minds of worldly or wicked men, the dreadful apprehension of endless torments. I say worldly and wicked men, for the true Christian does not need this doctrine for his consolation. He is safe without it." *

"The wicked and worldly" are a class of persons, who concern themselves very little about any religious views whatever. All they suffer from fear, arising out of any religious theories or doctrines, or enjoy either, is exceedingly small indeed. Their minds are too much absorbed in the outward and material, in the gratification of their physical appetites and passions, to think or care much about

* Tract 350, p. 7. Lee on Universalism, p. 298.

doctrines or articles of belief, or even what may await them hereafter. Such men are disturbed just as little by the doctrine of endless misery, as they are comforted by that of universal salvation. Gallio like, they care for none of these things, neither are they moved by them. This is manifest, from the circumstance before stated,* that the more wicked a community is, the less does Universalism prevail; and also from the fact that all the most horrible pirates and murderers that have disgraced and outraged humanity, and scourged human society, with whose history I am acquainted, were born and educated, and remained undoubting believers in endless misery, all their lives long, not doubting, when at last they were brought upon the scaffold, that the halter would as surely hasten their entrance into heaven, on an equality with the holy apostles and prophets, and the spirits of just men made perfect, as it would their exit out of this world; and this too, while they had as little doubt, that myriads of their race, who lead blameless and even useful lives, who speak the language of kindness to their friends; who give useful instruction to their children, and salutary advice to their neighbors; who "have fed the hungry, and clothed the naked, and attended, with decency, the public worship of God,"† would surely be eternally damned! And the most melan-

* p. 63.

† National Preach., Vol. iv., p. 222; No. for Aug., 1829

choly consideration of all is, that clergymen can be found, who can and will stand on the scaffold, and encourage them in such a delusion, and publish it to the world, as they have! What need have such men of Universalism to save them from fear? Provision is made for them in its opposite, in a far more ample degree, than Universalism *dares* to promise. Few of its preachers could be found, who would stand upon the scaffold, beside a monster so defiled with sin and crime, that the loathing earth would no longer endure his presence, and encourage him to think, however deep and sincere his repentance, that the eternal world will open upon his soul with as bright glories and as high enjoyments, as upon that of the martyred Stephen or the sainted John; or tell the motley crew, assembled to witness his execution, that he so believed. Universalism has no such comforts for those who have devoted their lives to vice and crime, and the commission of the foulest abominations, when about to be thrust out of the world by the executioner's hand; while it refuses the hope of future bliss to those who lead virtuous, good and useful lives, and at last, in a good old age, close their earthly pilgrimage, in their own beds, surrounded by their families and friends!

And then, in regard to the statement that "the true Christian does not need this doctrine for his consolation," I do not know but it may be so. If it is thus, I would like to know how many among the

believers in endless misery would be found *true* Christians, when brought to this test. What are the facts? Do we not on all hands hear the confession, from those persons, that they are constantly haunted with doubts and fears as to what may be their condition in another world; and do not much the larger portion of the believers in this terrible doctrine, rather yield themselves up to fate, with a vague and indefinite hope that God will treat them kindly after their bodies die, than have a firm and unwavering faith in future bliss, that triumphs in the hour of mortal dissolution? If such is not the fact, how are we to explain the circumstance, that it has come to be a doctrine of these people, that doubts and fears concerning our future prospects are an evidence of our piety? Why are individuals told, as I know they have been, that they have good reason to doubt the genuineness of their piety, because such was the strength of their faith, that they were not troubled with doubts and fears?*

Beside, "true Christians" are not so superlatively selfish, as to care nothing about the fate of others, if so be, that they are safe themselves. Such persons feel as deep an interest in the salvation of other men, as they do in their own; for they love their

* "But, lately, the very absence of doubt has caused me to doubt; for if I were a child of God, how should I be free from those doubts which trouble his children?" Life of Payson, p. 54, American Tract Soc. Ed.

neighbor as themselves. No "true Christian" can be satisfied with a hope merely for himself. He wants a hope for *others*, to give him all the "consolation" he needs; yea, for *everybody*. When a true Christian, who believes the doctrine "of endless torments," looks about upon his fellow-men, and sees how many, even of his cherished friends, and may be his own dearest children, there are, for whom he can indulge no hope, according to his received faith, what anxiety and fear seizes upon his mind, upon their account, if not on his own! What bitterness of soul is caused to the purest and best of those among the believers of this fearful doctrine, on account of the want of a hope, that will encircle in its embrace all their kindred and friends! Can it be said then, in truth, of Universalism, that "the true Christian does not want this doctrine for his consolation," although "he is safe without it?" If he is safe without it, others, and may be his best friends, and his own children, are not.

The truth is, it is not the wicked and the worldly, but the most serious minded, the purest and best men, who suffer the most from the belief of the doctrine of "eternal torments;" and the more serious, thoughtful, devout and tender-hearted he is; or, in other words, the more truly Christian his soul becomes, the more will this awful idea harass and torment his mind.

SECTION XI.—UNIVERSALISM PLEASING TO THE CARNAL HEART.

The doctrine of universal salvation is calculated to "please and gratify the desires of the natural heart."

The natural heart is a heart that is as God made it, before it has become hardened and corrupted by error, passion and sin. That such a heart, all full of benevolence and kindness, would be pleased with the idea of the final return of all souls to God and the enjoyments of heaven, I cannot doubt; nor do I regard it as a very serious objection to any doctrine, that it is agreeable to the desires of such a heart. I know, indeed, all men are destitute of such hearts, until their souls are renovated by the sanctifying power of the gospel of Christ. Their minds may perceive the beauty of this idea, in an unregenerate state, while their hearts are estranged from God, and under the perverting and stupefying power of sin; but they cannot feel how excellent it is, until they have been converted and become like little children. Then, when the individual looks about him, and sees how much sin and misery there is in the world, it is a delight to his heart to hope and believe, that a time will come, when all this misery, and the sin which is its cause, shall come to an end, and those held in its slavery, brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and every heart attuned in harmony with the great Heart of the universe.

I am aware, however, that this is not what is meant by the phrase "*natural heart*" in the objection under consideration. I know it is intended to convey the same idea as the apostle does by the phrase "*carnal mind.*" What sort of a mind is this? This can be determined the best from the works it does, which we will let the same apostle describe. "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, divisions, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revilings, and such like."* It is the opposite of the spiritual mind, whose fruits are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."†

Such, then, is the carnal mind. It is a mind under the control of unworthy and corrupt principles and feelings Does Universalism coincide with the views and feelings of an individual in such a state of mind? To answer this question there is no necessity of going into any long process of reasoning. Universalism has already been defined,‡ and in view of that definition, we may appeal directly to facts. Does not the fact, that the more ignorant and depraved any community is, the less Universalism prevails,§ have a strong bearing upon this point? Does not this circumstance go to prove, most conclu-

* Gal. 5: 19—21.
† Gal. 5: 22, 23.
‡ pp. 8—13.
§ See p. 63.

sively, that Universalism does not harmonize with the desires and feelings of the carnal heart? If it is not so, how happens it, that the greatest success attends the efforts to extend this doctrine, in the most enlightened and virtuous communities, and the least, yea that all efforts are nearly abortive, in communities of a different character?

Beside this, go to the proud, the haughty, the tyrannical, the malicious and the hating, and preach Universalism to them; tell them that God is as well disposed toward those they despise, contemn, hate and trample upon, and that Christ has done as much for their salvation, and that they will be brought down to a level, and perhaps thrust below these persons, in the world to come, and will it please and gratify their hearts? Go to an individual whose soul is in a storm of passion, and preach to him that the object of his rage is his brother, and destined to the realms of everlasting blessedness, and will the idea harmonize with the feelings of his heart? Not at all. The desire of his heart will be to hurl the thunder-bolts of heaven at those with whom he is offended. Hence, how often do we hear the remark, "Were it not for such and such men, I should be a Universalist! There ought to be a hell for such men; and if they are going to heaven, I do not wish to go there!" When in fact the persons concerning whom the remarks are made, are really better men than the individual who makes them. Upon

this point we might fairly turn the tables upon those who believe the doctrine of endless misery. That fearful doctrine perfectly harmonizes with the feelings and wishes of a man burning with wrath and vengeance. And hence, when an individual becomes angry with any one, he at once falls to cursing and damning him to hell, or, in the language of Rev. Mr. McClure, "They (Universalists) commonly swear Orthodox oaths. Of this fact everybody is aware. Let them get angry, and you hear nothing but hell, and the devil, and damnation."*

SECTION XII.—A UNIVERSALIST MEETING IN A NEW PLACE.

"Who are they that usually compose the audience of a Universalist preacher? Are they the most sober and intelligent part of the community? . . . . Are they not rather those whom the Bible would designate as wicked, prayerless, impenitent, irreligious persons; those who make a mock of experimental religion, and habitually neglect the duties of practical piety?" †

If this is applied to the established congregations of the Universalist denomination, a fouler and more

* Lectures on Universalism, Lecture 2, first Edition. In his second edition he struck out this confession, so full of truth, because so much to the discredit of his own theology, and in honor of Universalism; for it is an admission that a Universalist cannot swear consistently with his faith.

† Tract 224, p. 54–5, and p. 7, *et seq.*

malicious and slanderous libel could not be uttered, than is implied in these questions, and the statements to which they refer. For respectability, intelligence, and virtue, their congregations will not suffer, when compared with any of those professing the doctrine of endless punishment. But if these questions relate merely to the congregations which come together the *first time* a Universalist preacher makes his appearance in a place, and particularly in a large town, I am free to confess the implication contains considerable truth, though not fully correct. And the question arises—Why is it so? How does it happen? I do not hesitate to charge it all upon the unrighteous representations made of Universalism, by those who oppose it. This I will now attempt to show.

In the first place, I remark negatively, that these deists, profane swearers, neglecters of public worship, violators of the Sabbath, lewd, intemperate and loose persons, who come together to listen to the first promulgation of Universalism in a place, cannot be influenced by the ideas of the doctrine, as understood and promulgated by its believers, because they have had no opportunity to become acquainted with it, from this source. Whence, then, did they derive their notions about this doctrine, which they construe into a justification of their vile and unprincipled course of conduct? There is but one source from which they could possibly have derived their

notions of it, from the very circumstances of the case, and that is, from its *enemies*, in the occasional warnings against it, and the descriptions of its dreadful character, from pulpits opposed to it, and from tracts and books, written more for the purpose of bringing odium upon, than confuting it.

Now, I maintain, that these shameless caricatures of Universalism, are just what is calculated to please and gratify the vilest of mankind; to encourage them to continue in their sins; and lead them to expect a Universalist meeting, *to be a grand rally of the kingdom of Satan.* Just look at the way in which it is represented. People are told that Universalists preach that the foulest whelp of sin, the moment he dies, will go right into heaven, without the slightest change of character, all reeking with the pollutions of sin and iniquity, direct from the filthiest and most abominable stews of the realm of sin, to be the companions of holy apostles, and prophets, and the spirits of just men made perfect; that it will make no difference what men do, if they only contrive to keep out of the hands of the civil authority; and finally, that the sinner is just as well off, if not much better, than the righteous. And sometimes it is recommended to men, if they believe Universalism, that they plunge into all manner of sin; that they run riot with iniquity, and when tired of this dignified and worthy amusement, to hasten their entrance into paradise, with the use

of the pistol, the halter, the water, or by poison in some form.

What could be more pleasing to the vilest, most shameless and debauched of mankind, whose hearts are fully set upon doing evil, than such notions? and what more alarming to the friends of good order, sobriety, morality and religion? Such sentiments most undoubtedly strengthen the hands of the wicked, and make sad the hearts of the righteous. Hence, in all places where little or nothing is known of Universalism, except from its *enemies*, all the most worthless and abandoned men in the community, *swear they are Universalists;* and if an appointment happens to be made in the place, they are in ecstacies, fully anticipating, that they shall be confirmed and strengthened in the unhallowed views they have of Universalism, and thus be encouraged in their course of ruin and death. And the minister, ignorant of the actual state of things, may be instrumental, in some degree, of confirming these impressions, by devoting all his energies to proving the single point of universal salvation. But who is responsible for all this mischief? *I answer, its enemies.*

That such is the case, is fully proved by the fact, that if, in process of time, a Universalist minister should be settled in that same place, where all the dens of sin were filled with rejoicing at the idea of having a Universalist meeting, these same

persons will soon change their tune, and instead of being constant, punctual and zealous patrons, supporters and attendants of the meetings, their zeal will begin to cool; they will begin to be only occasional attendants, and finally abandon the meeting altogether, muttering that *it is not what they expected*, or swearing outright, that "this Universalist minister is ——— worse than the Orthodox!"

With these startling facts before us, I ask, who is responsible for this temporary encouragement, given to these miserable persons, in their course of sin and iniquity, and which would have been permanent, but for an opportunity being presented to the believers of Universalism, to speak for themselves? Not its friends surely; for as soon as they secured a fair opportunity to be heard, these delusions were soon dispelled. But it is chargeable entirely to its enemies; and this wretched delusion would have remained upon the minds of these miserable sinners, and they have derived encouragement from what they supposed to be Universalism, until the light of the eternal world dawned upon their souls, if its friends and believers had not have secured the opportunity of dissipating it. And this is undoubtedly the case, in multitudes of places, where the enemies of Universalism hold undisturbed dominion. Multitudes of persons are sent blindfold to perdition, from such places, by the misrepresentations and caricatures of this doctrine.

Could I reach the ears of those ministers, who indulge in these misrepresentations of Universalism, I would tell them, they are not only incurring the guilt of slander, by pursuing such a course and indulging in this kind of opposition; but perverting and corrupting public morals, by strengthening the hands of the wicked, and giving them encouragement and comfort in their sins. And I would beg of them to entirely change the character of their opposition, if not from the fear of God, from regard to man and the morals of society. If they do not, sure I am, that the light of eternity will make sad revelations to their souls, and they will have a fearful account to render, at the bar of the Almighty.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORIGINAL WORDS RENDERED EVERLASTING, ETERNAL, ETC., CONSIDERED AS AN OBJECTION TO UNIVERSALISM.

SECTION I.—PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In this and the subsequent chapters, I shall examine the objection urged against Universalism, drawn from the Scriptures, and founded upon the use of the words rendered *everlasting*, *eternal*, etc., and those translated *hell*, *grave*, etc., in our common version of the Bible. It will be my aim not only to meet the arguments, by which the popular interpretation of them, is attempted to be sustained, but to show affirmatively, the meaning we should attach to them, as used in the Scriptures.

I am aware that this is a subject, which involves much learned inquiry, and relates to languages with which few of my readers are acquainted, or even the alphabet of which they can read. These are very serious obstacles in the way of making the subject intelligible to common readers, and enabling them to perceive the full force of all the arguments that will be used. But I shall endeavor to keep the text as free from Hebrew, Greek and Latin words, as the

nature of the subject will admit, and throw as many of the quotations, I shall find it necessary to make, in these languages, into notes in the margin, as possible, putting only the translation in the text. In this way, I hope to free my remarks from much of the obscurity, to common minds, which invariably attaches to a discussion, when there is a frequent recurrence of words in a foreign language.

My remarks will be confined to the original words, rather than to the English rendering of them, because the controversy is *only* in relation to those, and the correctness of the English translation of them. Had the Scriptures have been written at this day, and in the English language, there could have been no controversy in relation to the meaning of those passages, where these terms occur; for the English words have a well defined and universally admitted meaning. But it is not so with regard to the original Scriptures. They were written in a remote country and period of the world's history, amid circumstances, scenery, manners, customs and habits of thought, modes of expression, and in languages widely different, in almost every respect, from our own. Hence the necessity of philology and interpretation, upon the correct use of which, the verity and accuracy of all translations do and must depend, as all scholars know full well.

I know, indeed, there is a disposition in a certain class of minds, to regard all questions as to the cor-

rectness of the *translation* of any words or phrases, in our common version of the Scriptures, as *tampering* with the Bible itself; and I regret to say, that too many may be found, who ought to know better, if they do not, that are willing, and actually do allow themselves to foster this prejudice. But it should ever be borne in mind, by all persons, that all *translations* of the Scriptures, are but the *fallible judgment* of *fallible men*, as to the *meaning* of the original; and of course that their *translation* is the legitimate subject of criticism. A translation of the Scriptures has and can have, from the very nature of things, no other authority than is imparted to it by the abilities, attainments and character of the *translator* or *translators*, and their fitness for the work. And the accuracy and fidelity of a translation can be determined, only by an actual *comparison* with the *original*, about the precise meaning of which, in many instances, the most impartial, candid and thoroughly qualified may honestly differ.

The subjects I propose to discuss, in the following pages, are those upon which much has been written upon both sides; and much which the authors never thought of, as having a theological bearing, but as mere matters of criticism. Hence it will not be my aim, nor shall I pretend to present anything particularly new or original, upon these subjects. I shall aim only to collect, in as brief a space as possible, all the information I can command, in relation

to them, and present the matter in my own way. The only merit that will be claimed for this *compilation*, for it will be little else, is diligence and faithfulness in collecting the materials, and candor and impartiality in presenting them. If this is secured, I shall attain the height of my ambition, and doubtless render a service to my fellow-Christians. With the hope that such may be the result, the matter is presented to the consideration of all candid and intelligent Christians.

SECTION II.—ADMISSIONS OF THOSE OPPOSED TO UNIVERSALISM.

It is admitted on all hands, that the words *aiōn* and *aiōnios* * are "sometimes used to signify a limited duration."† This being the case, of course, these terms cannot, of themselves, in all cases, express an endless duration, nor, indeed, can they

* The first of these words, *αἰών*, is a noun, and the other, *αἰώνιος*, is an adjective derived from *αἰών*. In this discussion I shall consider these words together, as the same, because they evidently bear the same general meaning, from their near affinity to each other. In quoting texts, I shall make no distinctions, in regard to these words, as a general thing. I wish also here to state once for all, that when it is necessary to use Greek or Hebrew words in the text, I shall put them in English letters, and thus confine Hebrew and Greek characters entirely to the notes. I do this, that the subject may be the more intelligible to the mere English reader.

† Tract 224, p. 16.

do this in any case, if this admission is correct. This sense must be *imparted* to those terms from the subject to which it is applied, or something in connexion with it, if they bear this sense at all. This seems to be a natural inference from the admission made. But it is not so regarded by the objector.

Hence the following rule is laid down by which to determine their meaning in such cases as the admission is founded upon. "When the word *aiōnios* is applied to hills and mountains, as it sometimes is in the Bible, we know, from the nature of the case, that it has a limited meaning; but when applied to things which in their nature are capable of an endless duration, and there is nothing in the connexion to limit its meaning, we are bound to understand it in its unlimited sense."*

Although this rule is framed with an especial reference to the case in hand, and quite as much to favor the views of the objector as the facts in the case will warrant, still it will be seen, after all, that he is compelled to admit the principle Universalists contend for, much as he has endeavored to cover it up, by the unnecessary multiplication of words. He admits that the *extent* of the duration expressed by these terms, is to be determined in each individual case, by the subject to which they are applied and the connexion in which they occur. Even in

* Tract 224, p. 17.

those cases where he would *seem* to pronounce, *a priori*, that they express an *endless* duration, he admits it may be necessary to examine "*the connexion*," before the matter can fairly be put to rest, or authoritatively determined.

Thus, while the objector would seem to deny the position claimed by the Universalist, he, in effect, admits it; and this admission is all that is needed to make out his case, so far as these terms are applied to punishment. For with this admission, upon all fair logical principles, he has a right to assume, that these terms express only a *limited* duration, when applied to punishment, until it is shown, that there is something in the nature of punishment, or in the connexions where they are used, which make it necessary that they should be taken in the sense of endless. This is the affirmative position, which is always the side to be *proved*. It is always illogical and unfair to require any one to prove a *negative*, though it sometimes becomes necessary.

Thus it will be seen, that the whole matter of the duration of punishment, so far as these words are concerned, might be safely rested upon these admissions. But there are other arguments by which it is attempted to fix upon these terms, the sense of "absolute eternity." Many of these are exceedingly plausible to a mere English reader,

and those who have never gone into a thorough investigation of the matter, and they will now claim our serious and deliberate attention and consideration.

SECTION III.—THE ARGUMENTS, BY WHICH IT IS ATTEMPTED TO FIX UPON THE TERMS AIŌN AND AIŌNIOS THE SENSE OF ENDLESS DURATION, CONSIDERED.

"1. These terms do, in their original and proper sense, denote duration without end. This is evident from their derivation; being formed of the two Greek words, *aei* and *ōn;* which properly signify always existing." *

Now the truth is, there is no such agreement among grammarians and lexicographers, in regard to the derivation of these terms, as the above statement implies; for beside the derivation there named, two others have been *suggested*, if not maintained. Mr. Goodwin, a ripe and accurate scholar, says, "It is not necessary to form *aiōn* by a composition of *aei* and *ōn*. It may arise much more naturally and more in the common order of things, from the verb *aiō*.† It need only be its present active participle converted into a substantive, according to a common usage of the Greek language." ‡ "Its proper force,

* Tract 224, pp. 16, 17. † ἀΐτω.
‡ Christian Examiner, No. for March, 1831, Art. 4, p. 42.

in reference to *duration*, seems to be more that of *uninterrupted* duration than otherwise; a term of which the duration is *continuous*, so long as it lasts, but which may be completed and finished; as *age*, *dispensation*, *sæculum*, in a general sense." * It has been suggested from another source, though not one entitled to so much reliance, that it is "derived from *aia*,† a poetical word meaning the earth or world, and *ōn* ‡ as a participle of *eimi*,§ to exist." ‖ Even Prof. Stuart *admits* these terms have a "meaning sometimes attached" to them, which plainly shows them to have been derived from *aiō*,¶ which he very summarily pronounces "a mistaken derivation." ** But were it compounded as the objector maintains, the inference he draws, is by no means a necessary inference; for then "the original root is the verb *aō*,†† which signifies *to breathe*." ‡‡ Beside, the sense of words depends more upon *usage* than upon their *derivation;* for this often gives a meaning to words, which bears not the slightest affinity to what might be expected, from the derivation.§§

* Christian Examiner, No. for March, 1831, p. 42.

† αἶα. ‡ ων. § εἰμι. ‖ James Hall. ¶ ἀΐω.

** Exegetical Essays, p. 15. Also a reply, in Christian Examiner, for March, 1831, p. 34, *et seq.*

†† ἄω. ‡‡ Christian Examiner, No. for March, 1831, p. 43.

§§ "Etymology is not conclusive evidence of the meaning of words. . . . . It does not afford that positive evidence, which would justify us in affirming with certainty, this or that to have been the indisputable meaning of any particu-

"2. Christ and his apostles, if they meant to be understood, must have used the terms in question, according to their known and established signification at the time they spoke and wrote. Now Josephus informs us, that the Jews of our Saviour's time, especially the Essenes and the Pharisees, the two leading sects among them, held the doctrine of the endless punishment of the wicked."*

That these two leading sects among the Jews believed the doctrine of eternal punishment, must be admitted by all who have given any attention to the subject. It will also be admitted, by all candid and fair-minded men, that Christ and his apostles "must have used the terms in question, according to their known and established signification, at the time," if they wished to be understood. And the very point to be settled is, whether they used these terms to express an endless duration, and applied them to the future punishment of the wicked. If there is any evidence to prove this point, it yet remains to be adduced.

lar term. Words change their meaning; oftentimes so much in the course of a few generations, that the etymological sense of a term may have been the true one among writers of one age, while among those a century or two later, it may sustain a very different import. After etymology has borne its witness, we must next appeal to those other evidences in the case, which are more important and more decisive than this." Christ. Examiner, No. for March, 1831, p. 44.

"Nouns derived from verbs, and verbs from nouns, do, by usage, often acquire a sense entirely diverse from what their etymology would indicate. *Usus et jus et norma loquendi.*" Stuart's Exeget. Ess., Appendix, p. 155.

* Tract 224, p. 17.

So far as I have the means of learning the facts, they go to establish the directly opposite position. It is said of Philo, an Egyptian Jew of the time of Christ, and a believer in endless misery—"His favorite epithet for *eternal*, or *endless*, is *aidios;* * which, with some other words signifying *immortal*, *interminable*, etc., he applies to future misery. So far as we have observed, *aiōnios* is never so applied."† Josephus, in describing the doctrine of the Pharisees, says—They believed "the souls of the bad are allotted, *aidios ergmos*,‡ *to an eternal prison*, and punished with *aidios timōria*, *eternal retribution*." In describing the doctrine of the Essenes, Josephus says, they believed "the souls of the bad are sent to a dark and tempestuous cavern, full of *adialeiptos timoria*,§ *incessant punishment*." ‖

Now this is a very different phraseology from that adopted by Christ and his apostles, in reference to the punishment of the wicked. Not an instance can be pointed out in the New Testament, where they adopt any such phraseology, or anything kindred to it. The Saviour, in speaking of the punishment of the wicked, uniformly adopts the phrases, *kolasin aiōnion*,¶ or *aiōniou kriseōs*,** "eternal punishment," or "eternal damnation," as

* ἀΐδιος. † Universalist Expositor, Vol. 3, p. 446.
‡ ἀΐδιος εἰργμὸς. § ἀδιάλειπτος τιμωρία.
‖ Universalist Expositor, Vol. 3, p. 437.
¶ κολασιν αἰώνιον, Matt. 25 : 46.
** αἰωνίου κρίσεως, Mark 3 : 29.

translated in our common version. Thus it will be seen, that Jewish writers of the time of our Saviour, in describing the duration of the punishment of the wicked, which they believed to be endless, used very different phraseology from him, to describe it, so far as single terms are concerned, to say nothing of their amplification of the idea, and the collateral associations. They call punishment, *aidios*, or *adialeiptos timōria*,* while the Saviour calls it *aiōnios krisis*, or *kolasis aiōnios*, and the apostles, *olethros aiōnios*, *everlasting destruction*;† and *puros aiōnios*, *eternal fire*.‡

Hence, in speaking upon this subject, in reference to the Jews, both of Egypt and Palestine, it has been said—"It is important to observe, that in neither country do we find it connected with the peculiar representations, or expressed in the peculiar

* In addition to what is in the text relative to Jewish phraseology, I have been furnished with the following by Rev. H. Ballou, 2d, D. D. "Philo applied words to punishment which mean *immortal, interminable*. These words are αθανατος and ατελευτητος. At least, I find in his Tract *De Præmiis and Pœnis*, Tom. ii., pp. 419, 420, of Mangey's Edition, the following sentence concerning the wicked;—ζῆν ἀποθνήσκοντα ἀεί, καὶ τρόπον τινα θάνατον αθάνατον ὑπομείνων καὶ ἀτελεύτητον, *to live always dying, and to undergo as it were an immortal and interminable death*. . . . . He sometimes uses αἰωνιος in a temporal sense; and once at least αἰωνιος κολασις for the injury which an offended neighbor will pursue us with, if we incur his hatred. Fragmenta, Tom. ii., p. 667."

† 2 Thess. 1 : 9. ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον.

‡ Jude 7. πυρὸς αἰωνίου.

phraseology, which distinguishes the controverted texts in the New Testament. With many of these passages, it has no coincidence; so that it would not be suggested by their language. On the contrary, we have seen, in a former period, that the larger part of the expressions in question were then habitually applied by the Jews, to the judgments and afflictions of this world. What we have said of Philo, may be repeated of Josephus. . . . . *Aidios* is the word which he commonly uses for eternal. *Aiōnios* frequently occurs; and he generally applies it to the affairs of the present life. Thus, he speaks of the *everlasting** name which the patriarchs left behind them, of the *everlasting* glory of the Jewish nation and heroes; of the *everlasting* reputation of Herod; of the *everlasting* memorial which he erected; of the *everlasting* worship in the temple of Jerusalem; of the *everlasting* imprisonment to which John, the tyrant, was condemned by the Romans, etc."†

Thus it will be seen, that Christ and his apostles have *not* used the current phraseology of their time, in reference to the *duration* of punishment, if we are to regard the writings of their cotemporaries as any evidence in the case. On the other hand, they have adopted terms to express its duration, which their cotemporaries, in common with the Old Testament Scriptures, commonly applied to earthly

* *αἰώνιος.* † Universalist Expositor, Vol. 3, p. 440.

glory, the punishment which men inflict upon each other, and things of a temporal character. What is the natural and obvious inference from these facts, if they are to be regarded as evidence in the case, anyway? Is it not plainly, that Christ and his apostles could not have entertained the commonly received views upon this subject? If they had, is it supposable that they would have neglected to have used the commonly received phraseology in relation to it, and adopted that which, as commonly used by their cotemporaries and their Scriptures, was calculated to convey a very different idea, as they have? No one can question this; for it would be to impeach their *ingenuousness*, if not their *honesty*.

"3. In the Bible, the word AIŌNIOS is applied to the future happiness of the righteous, and the future misery of the wicked in the same connexion."*

There is but one example of this, in the whole Bible, and that is the following—"These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment, but the righteous into life *eternal*."† And in this case, the objector assumes for an undisputed truth, what certainly needs to be proved; viz., that this text is used with an *exclusive* reference to the condition of men in the future world. This is denied, and the proof demanded. It is denied that it is intended to describe merely and solely the *duration* of the life of

* Tract 224, p. 18. † Matt. 25: 46.

the righteous, or the punishment of the wicked, in the world of spirits *alone*. I believe it relates just as truly to the righteous and the wicked in *this* world, as in the *next*, and to those in the world *to come*, as to those in this *present world*. I believe the design of this text is, to describe the *general principles* by which the Divine government is regulated, in its dealings with mankind; and that what is meant to be expressed by it is, that it is an immutable law of God's government, that there is an inseparable connexion between goodness and happiness, and wickedness and misery. If this be a law of the moral government of God, it must prevail *wherever* this government is established. If it is said, this text does not unequivocally say this; I reply, neither does this text or its context unequivocally affirm the contrary, nor indeed, to our mind at least, imply anything of this kind. In defence of the view just expressed, it may be remarked;

1. That the word *life*, as applied to the righteous in the New Testament, and in this text among the rest, cannot mean mere existence, because the bad as well as the good possess this in the future, as well as the present world; for there is to be a *resurrection** both of the just and the unjust.† It

* ἀνάστασιν μελλειν ἔσεσθαι νεκρῶν, *will be a future life of the dead.* Dr. Campbell's Note on Matt. 22: 23. Also, Prel. Diss. D. 6., p. 2, § 19. † Acts 24: 15.

must refer to the moral condition of the individual; to the state of his mind and heart, as a source of happiness or enjoyment. But this peculiar something which the righteous possess, is not possessed by the bad, as we read—"He that believeth on the Son hath *everlasting* life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."* Thus it is seen, that the term *aiōnios* is used to describe this life, this state of the mind and heart in a good man. Does it, or can it, in such a connexion, mean an endless duration?

The answer to this question must depend upon the answer to another question; viz., On what does the perpetuity of this state of the mind and heart, or the happiness flowing therefrom, depend? Does it depend upon the nature of the life, or upon certain *contingent* circumstances? I think all persons who will reflect upon the subject a few moments, must see, that its perpetuity depends entirely upon one circumstance; viz., whether the individual *continues* without end, to sustain the *character* which is the *cause* of this life or enjoyment. To make my idea more plain, I will suppose a case.

Here is a man who is intemperate, profane, ungodly. In the providence of God, he is awakened to a becoming sense of his guilty and lost condition. He becomes a penitent, reforms of his vicious practices, and enters upon a life of piety

* John 3: 36.

and virtue. He becomes a true believer; an entire change is effected in his character; and the whole current of his thoughts and feelings takes a new direction, and he lives with new aims and purposes. He becomes "a new creature;" "old things have passed away," and "all things become new."* In consequence, he enters into *everlasting* life; for "he that believeth on the Son HATH *everlasting life;*" he "IS passed from death unto life."† Such is his state and condition *when* he becomes a *believer*, no matter whether that be early or late, or *where* he is. Now how long will he remain in this state? How long will this life last, in his soul? Without end? Nay, we cannot affirm this *unconditionally*. It will be so IF he continues to sustain the *character* which gives birth to it in his soul, without end. Hence the true answer to this question is—He will remain in this state and condition, just so long as he continues to maintain this *character*, and no longer. If, as has too often been the case, he falls and again becomes a profane, intemperate, and ungodly man, where is this life then? Does it still exist in his soul? Does he still possess that peace of soul which passeth all understanding? Most certainly not. His life, as a believer, has come to an end, and he is again in that state of mind and heart, which is denominated, in the Scriptures, "the gall of bitterness, and the bonds of

* 2 Cor. 5: 17. † John 5: 24. 1 John 3: 14.

iniquity," death, damnation, etc.—terms indicative not only of an *absence* of enjoyment, but a state of positive and continuous suffering.*

Such being the state of the case, it is manifest, that the *duration* of this life depends, not upon its nature, but upon the contingent circumstance, whether the individual remains *permanently* in that moral and religious condition of mind and heart, which gives birth to it in his soul. This is just as true of the future as of the present state; for men can no more be happy in the future world without being good, than they can in the present. This being the case, no term meaning a strictly *endless duration* could properly be connected with the word life, when used in the sense it is in the text under consideration.

2. This view of the matter may be further confirmed and established by the fact, that everywhere in the Scriptures, men are represented as being eligible to the enjoyments of this life, at the time *when* and the place *where* they become believers. And as men may become believers in this world, they may possess this life here. Hence we read—"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH *everlasting life;* and shall not come into condemnation; but IS passed from death unto life."† The phrase *everlasting life*, and the single term *life*, as used in this text, cannot refer

* Ezek. 18 : 1, 32. † John 5 : 24.

exclusively to another state, unless men can become believers *only* in the future world; for men are to come into the possession of it, or pass into it *when* they become believers, and as a consequence of their believing.

With these facts before them, what intelligent and reflecting mind can regard the phrase *everlasting life* as referring exclusively to men's condition in the world of spirits only? Surely such persons must see, that it applies to men's state and condition in this life, just as truly as in the next. So also they must see, in view of what has been said, that the use of *aiōnios* in connexion with the term life, is no proof of the endless continuance of that life, in any individual's soul; because the *duration* of it depends upon the *permanency* of the *cause*, or the *duration* of his *goodness*. The fact of a man's being in the enjoyment of this life to-day, is no evidence, though a presumption in favor of such an expectation, that he will be in its enjoyment to-morrow; because we do not know but that to-morrow he will abandon his integrity and virtue, and plunge into sin, and so become involved in condemnation and death. In other words, we cannot invest that with the character of a *positive certainty*, which from its very nature is *contingent*.

Such being the state of the case in regard to the use of the term *aiōnios* in connexion with the life of the righteous, I ask in the language of the objector—"Is it credible, that the inspired writers

should use the same word, in the same sentence, and in reference to the same general subject, in totally different senses?"* This will hardly be pretended; and of course this term, when applied to the punishment of the wicked, affords just as little evidence of its endless continuance, as it does when applied to the life of the righteous. Both rest precisely upon the same footing, and in neither case, does this term afford the slightest evidence as to their duration, whether it be longer or shorter. This is a *contingent* matter.

"4. The term *aiōnios* is uniformly used in the Scriptures, to denote the longest possible duration of which the subject to which they are applied, is capable."†

That this statement is entirely incorrect, only a few instances need be cited from the Scriptures, to demonstrate. These I will present in the language of another. "The land of Canaan is often said to be given to the seed of Abraham for an "*everlasting possession;* yet that *everlasting* possession ceased ages ago, notwithstanding both the subjects, viz., the land itself, and the descendants of Abraham, were capable of a much longer duration;" as

* Tract 224, p. 18. From what has been said, we infer, that the mere use of the word αἰώνιος in Matt. 25: 46, does not necessarily imply the positive eternity, either of the happiness of the good, or the misery of the wicked, after judgment."—*Chris. Exam.*, Vol. 5, p. 446, *No. for Nov. and Dec.* 1828.

† Tract 224, p. 18.

we happen to know, from their having actually endured to the present time. So likewise, when Jonah remained in the depths of the sea, though it was only for three days and three nights, he says, "the earth with her bars was about me forever." Here the term *forever* denotes about seventy hours; though the subjects to which it was applied, viz, the earth and Jonah, had a much longer duration."* Other instances might be produced, going to show the utter falsity of the declaration under consideration; but it is quite unnecessary, as those already presented, demonstrate its incorrectness, and overturn this position, designed to show that the term *aiōnios*, "when applied to things in a future world, to the rewards of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked, must denote absolute eternity."†

In addition to all this, to confirm the meaning of "absolute eternity," attempted to be fixed upon the term *aiōnios* in certain connexions, an appeal is sometimes made to the New Testament usage. Upon this issue the whole might be safely rested; for take Prof. Stuart's enumeration and classification of the passages where this term is used, and usage is entirely against the sense of "absolute eternity." He says, "It appears from the above representation, that there are sixty-six cases in

* Letters to Dr. Hawes, p. 33.
† Tract 224, p. 18.

which *aiōnios* is employed in the New Testament. Of these fifty-one are used in relation to the happiness of the righteous; two, in relation to God or his glory; six are of a miscellaneous nature; and seven relate to the subject of future punishment."* Now, bearing in mind the fact, that it has been already shown,† that the term cannot mean "absolute eternity," when applied to the happiness of the righteous, from the very nature of the subject, which way does usage look, with the above enumeration and classification before us? Fifty-one, out of the sixty-six cases, are at once referred to the class meaning an *indefinite* duration; and then the seven relating to the punishment of the wicked, must be placed in the same category, leaving only eight to bear the sense of endless, if the whole are given up, which no one will claim, who has any acquaintance with the subject. This surely is not making out much of a case in favor of "absolute eternity," as the sense of *aiōnios*, on the score of usage.

Such is my reply to the arguments by which the sense of "absolute eternity" is attempted to be fixed upon the terms *aiōn* and *aiōnios*—for what is true of one is true also of the other.‡ Of the sufficiency of the reply that has been given, the reader must

*Exegetical Essays, p. 46. †See pp. 123—127.

‡The only exception to this remark is, that *αἰών* is used much more frequently (112 times, if I have counted correctly) in the New Testament, than *αἰώνιος*.

judge. It is laid before him as an impartial juror, to determine the matter in the fear of God.

SECTION IV.—ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS TO SHOW THE TERMS AIŌN AND AIŌNIOS DO NOT MEAN "ABSOLUTE ETERNITY."

In the preceding sections many facts have been stated to meet the arguments therein noticed, designed to fix upon these terms the sense of endless duration. But there are many more facts and considerations bearing upon the same point, which could not properly be arranged under any of the divisions of those sections. These I now propose to gather up and present to the reader.

1. *Statements of Lexicons.*

Modern lexicons need not be appealed to, as they all agree in assigning endless or eternity as *one* of the meanings of these terms. Mr. Goodwin* says,

* I wish to say, in this place, that I am greatly indebted to the labors of this most laborious student and thorough scholar for very many of the facts and suggestions contained in this chapter; and any one who may wish to see the exhibition of facts upon which the statements quoted from him, are founded, is referred to a series of articles published in the Christian Examiner, commencing in the No. for Nov. and Dec., 1828, and ending in the No. for May, 1833. In relation to these articles, I think all who will carefully study them, will say with the editors of that paper:—"We acknowledge ourselves indebted to them for much information, and are convinced that their author has thrown a light upon the words in question, which will hereafter be gratefully ac-

"Hesychius, a lexicographer of either the fourth or sixth century, is the oldest to which I have had access. His definition of *aiōn* is very short, and makes no allusion whatever to any sense of *eternity* in this word." "I next appeal to Pharoninus, a lexicographer of the sixteenth century. . . . His authority, I trust, will be admitted as good, for it is very frequently quoted by the later writers, as that in which they place confidence. He gives a description of the meanings of *aiōn* at great length. I make the following extract. "*Aiōn* is *life*, feminely. Homer, "thyself shall be dispoiled of dear *existence;* from *aō*,* to breathe; and the *spirit* is breath. . . . and we, also, call the *inspiring* the *living*. . . . . *aiōn* is, also, the *eternal* and endless, as it seems to the theologian."† Here, I strongly suspect, is the true secret brought to light, of the origin of the sense of *eternity* in *aiōn*. The theologian first thought he perceived it, or else he placed it there. And the theologian will probably retain it there longer than any one else. Hence it is, that

knowledged by those who shall seek to discover their meaning, and which cannot excusably be disregarded by any biblical student." An important service would be rendered the Universalist ministry, if these articles should be issued in a book, edited by some competent person. Its value might be increased by extending the inquiry still farther.

* ἄω.

† "*Αἰων, ἡ ζωὴ θηλυκῶς. Ομηρος, Αὐτὸς δὲ φίλης αἰῶνος ἀμερθείς. Παρὰ το ἄειν πνέειν. καὶ ἄημα, τὸ πνεῦμα. . . . . καὶ ἔμπνουν δὲ τὸν ζῶντα φαμέν . . . αἰὼν, καὶ ὁ ἀΐδιος καὶ ἀτελεύτητος, ὡς τῷ Θεολόγῳ δοκεῖ.*"

those lexicographers who assign eternity as one of the meanings of *aiōn*, uniformly appeal for proofs to either theological, Hebrew, or Rabbinical Greek, or some species of Greek subsequent to the age of the Seventy, if not subsequent to the age of the Apostles, so far as I can ascertain. I do not know of an instance, in which any lexicographer has produced the usage of *ancient* classical Greek, in evidence that *aiōn* means *eternity*. I do not believe he could find a case to this purpose there."*

2. *Classical usage.*

Mr. Goodwin says, in regard to the sense of *eternity* in *aiōn*, "Ancient classical Greek rejects it altogether."† "In the Iliad and Odyssey, *aiōn* occurs thirteen times only as a noun."‡ "I notice in Hesiod only two instances of *aiōn*."§ "This is certain;—mean what it may, *aiōn* in Homer and Hesiod never means *eternity*."§ It may here be remarked, that these are two of the oldest Greek writings in existence. Their authors lived near a thousand years before the commencement of our era. "In Æschylus I notice nineteen instances of *aiōn*."§ "I believe no one will suspect that Æschylus ever imagined a sense of *eternity* to belong to *aiōn*."‖ He lived and wrote about 500 years before Christ. "In Pindar's Odes, not in-

* Christ. Exam. No. for March, 1831, pp. 46—48.
† Do., p. 48. ‡ Do., p. 53. § Do., p. 56. ‖ Do. p. 59.

cluding the Fragments, I notice thirteen instances of *aiōn*."* He lived and wrote about 495 B. C. "In Sophocles I notice nine instances of *aiōn*."† "Among the examined works of Aristotle, *aiōn* occurs five times in the treatise *de Mundo*, twice in the fourteen books of *Metaphysics*, and five times in the treatise *de Cœlo*." These twelve are the only instances in the examined works."‡ "It will be observed, that in every instance, there is a sense of *secrecy of the nature* and *indefiniteness of the duration* of *the existence* expressed by this word, but in no case a sense of positive *eternity*."§ "He considers *aiōn* to signify, in strict propriety, *a thing completed*, so as to be *permanent*, or enduring as long as its nature admits. He means to say, that a thing completed according to its nature, is called *aiōn* an *existence*, on account of its existing permanently or enduringly; the period of its permanency, or enduring, being conformed to its nature."‖ "As certainly as *human life* is not *eternal*, so certainly *aiōn* did not contain the meaning of *eternity*."¶ "In Euripides, I notice thirty-two instances of *aiōn*, either separate or in composition."** I have been thus particular in these statements, that the reader may see the extent to which the examination has been carried, and the grounds upon which the

* Christ. Exam., No. for March, 1831, p. 59. † Do., p. 61.
‡ Do., No. for May, 1831, p. 167. § Do., p. 170.
‖ Do., p. 174. ¶ Do., p. 177. ** Do., p. 179.

following conclusion is based. "The instances produced show plainly, that *aiōn*, in these writers, never express positive *eternity;* in some few cases it may signify a *term* of duration; but more commonly, it expresses either simply *existence*, or the person existing; and in many cases, the *vital principle*, or *life*, or the *living spirit* itself."*

This author also adds: "I have said nothing concerning the adjective *aiōnios*, for the single reason, that it does not occur in any instance in any of the Greek works within the present examination. Did I not know that it is to be found in Plato, I should be almost ready to believe that it did not exist in *ancient* Greek at all. I have had no opportunity to consult the works of Plato to any extent, and can therefore say nothing of the frequency or infrequency, with which this adjective occurs therein. But I will venture the present opinion, that *aiōnios* was *coined* by the early translators of the Pentateuch, as a proper representative of the adjective *olam*†, and is entirely of Hebrew-Greek origin. . . . In the entire absence of *aiōnios* from ancient Greek, within the present examination, it will not be thought unjustifiable to entertain the above opinion as to its origin, until further examination shall prove the opposite;‡ and it must be presumed, that it follows

* Christ. Exam., No. for May, 1831, p. 184. † עוֹלָם

‡ A further examination of Plato by this author only confirmed this conclusion, as may be seen in the work so often named, Nos. for March and May, 1832, pp. 99—105.

the general track of *aiōn*, in its meanings and shades of meanings, with the exception of those meanings of a noun, which cannot be imparted to an adjective, and those which it is known this noun never did impart to this adjective."* Thus much in regard to classical usage, and the inference to be drawn from it.

3. *Scripture usage.*

The scriptures are written in two different languages, the Hebrew and the Greek; but we have the whole Bible in Greek; the Old Testament being a translation made, about 286 years before Christ,† by a number of learned men in Alexandria in Egypt.‡ This is called the Septuagint version. I shall confine the examples to the Greek, because it is agreed on all hands, that the Greek words *aiōn* and *aiōnios* correspond entirely to the Hebrew *olam*, in sense, which "expression is never used in the Old Testament to denote an absolute eternity."§

In order that the matter may be presented to the mere English reader in the more striking light, and

* Christ. Exam., No. for May, 1831, pp. 186—7.

† This is probably the date only of the translation of the Pentateuch, while the translation of the remaining portion of the Old Testament was made by different individuals, at different and later times. Jahn's Introduction to the O. T., p. 52, Andover, 1827.

‡ Horne's Intro., Vol. 2., p. 163., *et seq.*

§ Noyes' Translation of the Heb. Prophets, Note on Micah 5 : 2.

enable him the more clearly to perceive the absurdity of maintaining that these terms properly denote "absolute eternity," I will translate them by the words ETERNITY and ETERNAL. When a translation of *aiōn* and *aiōnios*, they will be put in small capitals; and to prevent, as much as possible, the introduction of Greek words into the text, the translation only will be given, and when there is a variation in the phraseology, the Greek will be given in the margin.

1. In the following instances these terms are used in reference to things which have already come to an end. "I will give unto thee, and thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, *for an* ETERNAL *possession*."* "And thou shalt anoint them as thou didst their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office; for their anointing shall surely be a priesthood *through the* ETERNITY."† "Then his master shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-posts, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him *through the* ETERNITY."‡

"The waters compassed me about—even to the soul;
The weeds were wrapped about my head.
I went down to the bottoms of the mountains;
The earth with her bars was about me ETERNALLY."§

* Gen. 17 : 8; εἰς κατάσχεσιν αἰώνιον. Also, Gen. 13 : 15

† Exod. 40 : 15. εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, which is explained by εἰς τὰς γενεὰς αὐτῶν.

‡ Exod. 21 : 6. εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

§ Jonah 2 : 6. αἰώνιοι.

A multitude of other texts might be added to these, equally striking, to show these terms are used with reference to things which have come to an end; but these must suffice.

2. The term *aiōn* is repeated in the following instances. "To whom be the glory *during the* ETERNITIES *even to the* ETERNITIES."* "Unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ, *through all the ages, the* ETERNITY *and the* ETERNITIES."† "Now unto God and our Father be glory *through the* ETERNITIES even to the ETERNITIES."‡

3. In addition to the examples above, the term is used in the *plural* number in the following instances. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom *the ends of the* ETERNITIES *are come.*"§ "That *in the* ETERNITIES *coming*, he

* In this and the following examples I give the Greek as near a verbal rendering into English as is possible, accepting the definition of *eternity* as the legitimate meaning of *aiōn;* and this is done for the purpose of showing to the mere English reader something of the aspect of things, as presented to the mind of a scholar. The real meaning, I take to be this, taking the first text as an example. "To whom be the glory εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, *through all the ages,* or more literally, *from age to age.* Gal. 1: 5. And so of the rest.

† εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων, *through all generations from age to age.*

‡ Phil. 4: 20. Greek the same as in Gal. 1: 5. See also 1 Tim. 1: 17. Heb. 1: 8. Eph. 3: 21. 2 Tim. 4: 18. Heb. 13: 21. 1 Peter 4: 11. Rev. 1: 6; 4: 9; 5: 13, 14; 7: 21; 14: 11; 15: 7; 20: 10.

§ 1 Cor. 10: 11. τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντησεν, *the end of the ages are come.*

might show the exceeding riches of his grace."* "The mystery which hath been hid *from the* ETERNITIES *and from the generations.*"†

4. Beside the example above, the end of the *aiōn* is spoken of as follows;—"But now once in the end of the ETERNITIES, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."‡ "The harvest *is the end of the* ETERNITY."§ "So shall it be *in the end of this* ETERNITY."‖ "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what the sign of thy coming, and of *the end of the* ETERNITY?"¶

5. In the following texts, times are spoken of beyond the *aiōn.* "The Lord shall reign to *the* ETERNITY, and during the ETERNITY, and longer."** "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars *through the* ETERNITIES, *and*

* Eph. 2: 7. *ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσι τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις, in the ages coming.*

† Col. 1: 26. *ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν, from the ages and the generations.*

‡ Heb. 9: 26. *ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων, in the conclusion of the ages.*

§ Matt. 13: 39. *συντελείᾳ τοῦ αιῶνος ἐστιν, is the conclusion of the age.*

‖ Matt. 13: 40. *ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αιῶνος τούτου, in the conclusion of this age.*

¶ Matt. 24: 4. *τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αιῶνος, conclusion of the age.* See Campbell's Four Gospels, Prel. Diss. D. 12: Pt. 1, § 23.

** Exod. 15: 18. *κύριος βασιλεύων τὸν αἰῶνα, καὶ ἐπ' αιῶνα, καὶ ἔτι. The Lord shall reign from age to age, and beyond all the ages,* i. e., indefinitely in *duration.*

longer."* "And we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God *through the* ETERNITY and beyond."†

Such are a few of the examples presented by the Scriptures, of the usage of the term *aiōn.* We have seen that it is used to represent durations which have come to an end; that it is frequently repeated; that it is often used in the plural number; that the end of the periods it describes are often mentioned; and finally, that times after that described by this term are mentioned. With all this before us, who can believe, that a word bearing such a usage, could be regarded, by the sacred writers, as expressing "*absolute eternity*," as its primitive and necessary meaning? It appears to me, no candid man can; and the farther and more thorough the investigation is pursued, the more entirely must every such mind be satisfied, that such cannot be its meaning. If its strict and proper meaning was "absolute eternity," in the view of these writers, how could they have ever used it in the plural number? What sense is there in giving

* Daniel 12: 3. *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, καὶ ἔτι, through the ages and beyond them all.*

† Micah 4: 5. *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, καὶ ἐπέκεινα, through the age and beyond it.*

These three examples from the Septuagint, show most conclusively, that *αἰών*, in the judgment of these translators, did not express an absolute eternity; else why add other words to express a further continuance of the duration than this word itself expresses?

a plural, to a word, which of itself, means a single period of endless duration? And then, if the translators of the Old Testament had have regarded this term as, in any case, bearing the sense of endless duration, why have they, as in the examples quoted, not only used the term in the plural number, and then repeated it, but, as if not satisfied with the duration they had expressed, they add terms to express the continuance of time *indefinitely*, beyond that described by this term? These surely are singular phenomena to be exhibited by a word of the character the objector would have us believe it sustains. So far as Scripture usage is concerned, it seems to me, that we must come to the same conclusion we did, in regard to its classical usage; that it does *not* express "absolute eternity."

4. *Usage among the Christian Fathers.*

It is admitted, on all hands, that there were those among the early Christian Fathers, who were believers in universal salvation. The celebrated Origen is among the most distinguished of these men, and not only a noted believer, but defender of this doctrine. And yet he, with others who believed in the salvation of all men, are said, by those who have examined their existing works, to have called future punishment EVERLASTING, and to describe it as ETERNAL *fire* or torment.* "In all his works,

* Ancient Hist. of Universalism, p. 67.

Origen freely uses the expressions EVERLASTING *fire*, EVERLASTING *punishment*, etc., without any explanation, such as our modern prepossessions would render necessary, to prevent misunderstanding."* Such are the facts. Now how are we to explain them so as not to conflict with the position, that the original and proper meaning of *aiōnios* is *absolute eternity?* If these Universalists, who were themselves native Greeks, had have regarded this term as expressing such an idea, they could not have used it in describing a punishment in which they believed; because they openly and undisguisedly, not only *denied* the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment, but *maintained* that of universal restoration.†

Now this is a very important circumstance; for

* Ancient Hist. of Universalism, p. 114.

† It might be added, as a fact of some interest, that the doctrine of eternal punishment is not recognized as an article of belief in the church, in the earliest symbol of their faith extant—I mean the document called the "Apostles' Creed." I here give a copy of it in English. "I believe in God, the Father Almighty; and in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, buried, rose from the dead on the third day, ascended to the heavens, and sits on the right hand of the Father; whence he will come, to judge the living and the dead; and in the Holy Spirit; the holy church; the remission of sins; and the resurrection of the body." This is the common form of it, as it existed in the *fourth* century, in which it differs some, from more ancient copies. Murdock's Mosheim's Eccl. History, Vol. 1, p. 96; New Haven, 1832.

it not only shows, that they did not consider the term as expressing *absolute eternity*—and they were, certainly, as competent judges of its proper signification, being *native Greeks*, as we are at the present day—but it has a direct bearing upon the New Testament usage of the term. We know they were Universalists, and, of course, that they did not understand the term as expressing "absolute eternity." And using the term precisely as it is used in the New Testament, which they regarded as an authoritative rule of faith and practice, we know, also, that they must have considered its application to punishment as no evidence of its endless duration. This is further manifest, from the fact, that when the doctrine of universal salvation first became a matter of controversy, the Greek writers, who believed in endless misery, *never* used the circumstance of *aiōnios* being applied to punishment, in the Scriptures, as an argument against the doctrine of the Universalists.* Would they not have done it, had they have regarded the matter in the light in which it now is by the modern opposers of this doctrine? The application of this term to punishment in the Scriptures, is one of the main pillars by which the doctrine of endless misery is to be supported, in the judgment of its advocates, at the present day. Had the Greek Christians have regarded the term in the same light, they certainly

* Universalism Illustrated and Defended, p. 210.

would not have failed to have urged it as an argument against the Universalists.* This is a strong point. It shows that they did not consider it as meaning absolute eternity as used in the New Testament; and their judgment, in this matter, is worthy of great confidence, they being native Greeks, and a *native* is always more competent authority, as to the force and meaning of words in their own language, than any foreigner possibly can be, especially if he belongs to a distant age, and a country where the habits of thought and modes of expression are widely different.

Such are some of my reasons for thinking the original and proper meaning of the terms *aiōn* and *aiōnios* is not "*absolute eternity.*" I will recapitulate them. It has been shown, that the several positions assumed, to sustain this meaning, are not warranted by the facts in the case; that the oldest lexicons do not give *eternal* as *one* of the meanings of *aiōn;* that classical usage is against such an interpretation; that the Jewish usage before, at the time, and immediately subsequent to the advent of the

* The first instance on record of the circumstance of the term *αἰώνιος* being applied to punishment, in the New Testament, being urged as an argument against Universalism, occurred in the beginning of the fifth century. And this by Augustine, a Latin writer, and the father of what is now called the Calvinistic system of theology. He "was very imperfectly acquainted with the Greek language." Ancient Hist. Univ., p. 252, Boston, 1829.

Saviour, is against such a construction;* that Scripture usage is against it; and that the usage of it by the early Christian Fathers, themselves Greeks, is against it. It appears, also, that while the Pharisees and Essenes of the Saviour's time, believed the doctrine of endless punishment, and had certain terms and phrases by which they were accustomed to express this doctrine, Christ and his apostles have in *no* case adopted their phraseology, in speaking of the punishment of the wicked.

And now I submit it to any candid and fair mind, not utterly blinded by prejudice and preconceived opinions, if he can believe, with this array of facts before him, that these words, in their original and proper signification, mean "*absolute eternity?*" And this is the very point to be established, before the simple application of these terms to punishment can have any force as an argument in favor of its "*absolute eternity.*" It seems to me that a stronger case could not be made out nagatively, than the facts presented make out against this view. It is as near demonstration, as the subject will admit, that such is *not* its meaning.

With what has been said herein upon this subject, I would press the question home upon the mind of every believer in the doctrine of the "absolute eternity" of punishment, if he can believe, that if this terrible doctrine is Heaven's truth, that the God of

† See pp. 118—121, of this work.

all grace would have sanctioned the use of so equivocal a term, by his spirit, in revealing it to man? Might we not expect that he would have caused so tremendous a doctrine to have been set forth in the most plain, positive and unequivocal terms? Had it have been described in such terms as are used by Philo and Josephus, there would have been no room for dispute about the matter. But as it is, the matter is left in the most utter obscurity. Should we not pause and consider, before we presume to charge the Creator with trifling with his creatures in this way, concerning one of the most tremendous subjects that ever claimed the attention of mankind?

SECTION V.—CONCLUSION.

In the preceding part of this chapter, I have presented a variety of facts and considerations, going to show that the terms *aiōn* and *aiōnios* do not contain the meaning of "*absolute eternity.*" In conclusion, it may not be amiss to notice the positive side of the question, and some of the objections against the position, that these terms do not mean "duration without end."

1. I remark, that these words bear quite a variety of senses. Prof. Stuart considers them as used in the Scriptures with something like *ten* different meanings. So far as our present inquiry is con-

cerned, there are but two senses in which they are used, that are of particular interest. So far as the idea of duration is contained in them, I think they are well defined in the following words; viz., "On the supposition that *aiōn*, according to the common opinion, is compounded of *aei* and *ōn*, then, if applied to *time*, it would signify a multitude of *periods* or *times* united to each other;* *duration* indefinitely continued. Its proper force, in reference to *duration*, seems to be more that of *uninterrupted* duration than otherwise; a term of which the duration is *continuous* so long as it lasts, but which may be completed and finished; as *age*, *dispensation*, sæculum, in a general sense. If applied to *breath*, it would signify a *multitude of breathings*, or *breathing indefinitely extended;* and if applied to simple *existence*, it would signify *existence indefinitely extended*."†

From this definition, it will be seen, that *aiōn* answers, in meaning, very nearly to the English word *ever*, when it has reference to duration. The word *ever* expresses the idea of *progression* and *succession*, without defining the *duration* thereof; as he is *ever* moving; that is, he is *continually*, *uninterruptedly* in motion; but it does not describe the length of time he will be in motion. This is entirely *indefinite*. It may be longer, it may be shorter.

* "The comprehension of many times or periods."—*Phavorinus.*

† Christ. Exam., No. for March, 1831, p. 42.

So it is in reference to the terms in question, when they denote *duration* at all. The *duration* is entirely *indefinite*, depending wholly upon the nature of the subject to which they are applied, or the connexion in which they occur. Hence we find them used to denote widely different periods of time in length, varying from three days to many ages, as they are used in the Scriptures.

The reader can make the application of this definition to the texts already quoted, for himself, though he will find it necessary to use different English words to express their meaning, in different connexions, because we have no one English word answering precisely and fully to the meaning of the terms *aiōn* and *aiōnios*, though we have several which will fully express the idea in different connexions, and as applied to various subjects. Hence, in translating, we are necessitated to use different words in different connexions, and in their application to different subjects, as a rendering of these terms. I will give an example or two.* "For their anointing shall surely be a priesthood through the AGE."† "And he shall serve him ALL THE DAYS

* In these examples I shall put the rendering of *aiōn* and *aiōnios*, in small capitals, to save repeating the Greek words.

† The following remarks of Mr. Locke will show the occasion of the use and the idea intended by the rendering of age and ages. "The nation of the Jews were the kingdom and people of God, whilst the law stood. And this kingdom of God, under the Mosaical constitution, was called *αἰὼν ὁυτος*, this age, or as it is commonly translated, *this world*,

OF HIS LIFE." "To whom be glory from AGE to AGE;" that is *continually*. "They are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the AGE are come." "The Lord shall reign from AGE to AGE and beyond the ages;" that is for an *indefinite*, an *undefined* period in the future.*

2. The other sense to which allusion has been made, is that of *spiritual*. When applied to the life of the righteous, I can attach no other sense to

to which *αἰὼν ἐνεστώς*, the *present world*, or age, here answers. But the kingdom of God, which was to be under the Messiah, wherein the economy and constitution of the Jewish church, and the nation itself, that, in opposition to Christ, adhered to it, was to be laid aside, is in the New Testament called *αἰὼν μέλλων*, the *world*, or *age to come*." Note on Gal. 1: 4.

"Why the times, under the law, were called *χρόνοι αἰώνιοι*, we may find reason in their jubilees, which were *αἰῶνες*, "secula," or "ages," by which all the time under the law, was measured; and so *χρόνοι αἰώνιοι* is used, 2 Tim. 1: 9. Tit. 1: 2. And so *αἰῶνες* are put for the times of the law, or the jubilees, Luke 1: 70, Acts 3: 21, 1 Cor. 2: 7, 10: 11, Eph. 3: 9, Col. 1: 26, Heb. 9: 26. And so God is called the rock of *αἰώνων*, of ages, Isaiah 26: 4, in the same sense that he is called the rock of Israel, Isa. 30: 29, i. e. the strength and support of the Jewish state;—for it is of the Jews the prophet here speaks. So Exod. 21: 6, *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα* signifies not as we translate it, "forever," but "to the jubilee;" which will appear if we compare Lev. 25: 39—41, and Exod. 21: 2. See "Burthog's Christianity, a revealed Mystery," pp. 17, 18." Note on Rom. 16: 25. These are the reasons why we find the Jewish age, or the whole period of the Mosaic dispensation, sometimes spoken of in the singular, and at others in the plural number. For the same reasons, the time of the Messiah is called the age to come, and at others the ages to come.

* Exod. 40: 15, 21: 6, Gal. 1: 5, 1 Cor. 10: 11, Exod. 15: 18.

the term *aiōnios*, except that of *spiritual.* This class of persons go into *spiritual life*—the enjoyment of a *hidden*, a *concealed* life ; a life not seen and felt by the world at large. "This meaning, there is good reason to believe, was very ancient, if not the original meaning of the word. It is well known, that ancient philosophers believed in a class of beings, called *aiōens* or *æōns;* which were said to be, either mediately or immediately, derivations from the Supreme Divinity, and were entirely spiritual existences. They were all, originally, good ; but some of them had become wicked ; and so the whole class answered to the common modern idea of angels, on the one hand, and devils on the other ; or generally, to what we mean by the word spirits, be they good or evil. The one set were happy, the other unhappy ; but the happiness or unhappiness was wholly of a spiritual nature, consisting essentially in the state of each individual's thoughts and feelings, either in union with, or in opposition to the Divine Mind. These beings, as we have remarked, were called *æōns*, and the word *aiōnios*, the adjective of this name, very naturally expresses something having the nature of *æōns;* in other words, something *spiritual* in its kind, be its duration longer or shorter. It signifies something of that nature which belongs to spirits ; designating the kind, or nature of the thing ; and showing forth something relating to the inward

thoughts and feelings in the individual, without precisely marking the period of its continuance; the Greek word *aiōn*, answering to our word *spirit*, and *aiōnios*, to *spiritual*."*

It is not my purpose to go into a defence of the opinion that *spiritual* is one of the meanings of *aiōnios*, as it is used in the New Testament. I merely suggest it, as an individual conviction, after long and patient reflection upon the subject, for the consideration of my readers. A few examples of what seems to be such a usage are here appended. "Ye know no murderer hath SPIRITUAL life abiding in him."† "He that heareth my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath SPIRITUAL life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."‡ "Who hath loved us and given us SPIRITUAL consolation."§ And so of a multitude of other texts. And whatever may be thought of the critical grounds upon which this interpretation is founded,‖ one thing all can see, and that is, that this interpretation has the advantage of conveying to the mind, in such connexions, an intelligible idea, while the word *eternal* has no per-

* Christ. Exam., Vol. 5, pp. 446, 447.

† John 3 : 15. ‡ Do. 6 : 49. § 2 Thess. 2 : 16.

‖ See the series of articles in the Christian Examiner so often quoted from in this work, and described on p. 131, where is a very full exhibition of the critical grounds, both classical and scriptural, upon which *spiritual* is assigned as *one* of the meanings of *αἰών*.

ceptible meaning. The same idea is applicable to the punishment of the wicked. Their punishment, to a very great extent, is an *inward*, a *hidden* one—one of the soul—the thoughts and feelings; the duration of which must depend upon the mutability or permanency of the character the individual sustains. If the character is *changeable*, then the duration of the punishment it causes, must be *uncertain*, *indefinite*.

In conclusion, then, I remark, that if the terms *aiōn* and *aiōnios* are as indefinite, in regard to duration, when they express this idea at all, as has been shown, as I trust, most satisfactorily, they are, of all imaginable terms, the fittest to be applied to the happiness of the righteous and the misery of the wicked; for nothing is or can be more uncertain, so far as duration is concerned, than the happiness and misery of these individuals. And the reason is, that while it is certain every man will suffer punishment so long as he continues to sin, we cannot tell how long he will *remain* a sinner. As is his character to-day, so will be his condition; but what will be his character *to-morrow*, no one can tell. If *to-day* he is a sinner, to-morrow, he may reform and become a saint, and so *vice versa;* and with his change of character, there will come a corresponding change in his state and condition.

I will now notice one or two objections, which have been urged against the view that has been

presented of the meaning of the terms in question, though they are, in effect, met in the facts already stated.

1. If these terms do not express an endless duration, there are none in the language that do. This is a mistake. "*Aiōnios* is a word of sparing occurrence among ancient classical Greek writers; nor is it, by any means, the common term employed by them to signify *eternal.* On the contrary, they much more frequently make use of *aidios*, *aei ōn*, or some similar mode of speech, for this purpose. . . To me it appears that the Seventy, by choosing *aiōnios* to represent *olam*, testify, that they did not understand the Hebrew word to signify *eternal.* Had they so understood it, they would certainly have translated it by some more decisive word; some term, which, like *aidios*, is more commonly employed in Greek, to signify that which has neither beginning nor end."* The same word is used to express endless duration by Philo Judæus, with *athanatos* and *ateleutos*, and also by Josephus. These are also found in the Scriptures in several instances, with *akatalutos* and *aphtharsia.*† Thus, it will be seen, there is no want of terms in the language, to express absolute eternity, without using *aiōn* or *aiōnios* at all.

* Christian Exam., No. for Sept. 1830, pp. 25, 26.

† Rom. 1: 20. Jude 6. Heb. 7: 16. Rom. 1: 7. 2 Tim. 1: 10.

2. It has been said, if these terms are given up as expressing absolute eternity, we cannot prove from the Scriptures, that the human soul will exist or the righteous be happy without end. This is also a mistake. The word commonly used to describe the duration of human existence in the world of spirits, is *aphtharsia*,* *immortality* or indestructible existence, which is a much more decisive term to express endless duration, than *aiōn* or *aiōnios*.† So in regard to the duration of the happiness of the righteous; the truth is, we need no term to describe its duration. It is one of the laws of God, as fixed and immutable as the throne of the Almighty itself, that vice and misery, and virtue and happiness, are inseparably united; that they are coëxistent and coëxtensive; and that they will remain so as long as the human soul exists. The *righteous* will remain happy as long as the human soul exists; but the *individual* only so long as he is *righteous*. And so with the *wicked*; they will be punished as long as they exist in any world; but the *individual* only so long as he remains *wicked*. All depends upon this circumstance, as to the duration of any man's happiness or misery. Every man will be happy or miserable just so long as he is good or bad; and his state and condition will ever *vary*, in regard to happiness or misery, precisely as his *character varies*, in reference to goodness or badness.

* ἀφθαρσία. †2 Tim. 1: 10. 1 Cor. 15: 53.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HEBREW WORD SHEOL, COMMONLY RENDERED GRAVE AND HELL, CONSIDERED AS AN OBJECTION TO UNIVERSALISM.

SECTION I.—PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In times past, very much has been thought and attempted to be made out of the use of the word hell, in the Scriptures, without any reference to the original so rendered, as an argument against Universalism. It was thought, when a text was produced which represents the wicked as cast into hell, it was a sufficient refutation of this heresy, and a perfect demonstration of the truth of the doctrine of endless punishment. But that day has passed away; and now the inquiry is—Do the English words fairly represent the idea, intended by the original? This state of things has put a new face upon the controversy. The discussion has been transferred from the English translation, to the words used in the original Scriptures, where it rightfully belongs, although attended with many inconveniences in managing a popular discussion.

In the original Scriptures, there are three words translated hell, in our common version of the Bible; *sheol*, *Hades* and *Gehenna*. In one instance there

occurs a verb, which is in effect the same as the use of a fourth word, *Tartarus*.* But while persons are frequently represented as going to these places, no term is ever connected with them, calculated to convey the impression that their continuance in it, is to be duration without end.†

Such being the state of the case, it might be admitted, that these words denote a place of future punishment, and still nothing is gained in the way of making out the truth of the doctrine of eternal punishment. This is just as far from being proved after this admission as before; and if established at all, it must be done by some entirely distinct and independent testimony. It will, therefore, be my object, in what follows, to collect and present all the information relative to the meaning of these terms, and the ideas they were intended to convey, that I can command, and in as brief a space as I may be able, and make the matter plain and intelligible to all who will think.

* שְׁאוֹל, *αΐδης, γεέννα, τάρταρος.*

† There is but one text in which Hades occurs, and one where Gehenna is used which even seems an exception to this remark. In these instances, the *imagery* associated with these words, may *seem* to imply a contrary idea; but a further and more accurate examination of the matter will satisfy any candid and intelligent mind, that it is in appearance only. The texts are Luke 16: 23, and Matt. 18: 8, 9, and Mark 9: 43—48. See pp. 186—193, and 222—225.

SECTION II.—ADMISSIONS OF THE LEARNED.

While some are very confident that *sheol* means a place of endless punishment, as most of the older theologians were, others, and particularly recent writers, are quite diffident in these claims. Of this number is Prof. Stuart, who is not among the least. The fartherest he ventures to go, even when writing expressly to sustain the truth of the doctrine of eternal punishment, is to say, in regard to the following texts—"the cases in which *sheol* MAY designate the future world of woe."* "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to *sheol*."† "The wicked shall be turned into *sheol*, and all the nations that forget God."‡ "Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold of *sheol*."§ "But he knoweth that the ghosts are there, and that her guests are in the depths of *sheol*."‖ "Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and shall deliver his soul from *sheol*."¶

These are all the places where he thinks this term "*may*" mean "the future world of woe;" and after devoting nearly five pages to comments, mostly of an interrogative character, designed to show that "the meaning will be a good one, if we SUPPOSE *sheol* to designate future punishment," he concludes

* Exegetical Essays, p. 106. † Job 21 : 13. ‡ Ps. 9 : 17. Prov. 5 : 5. ‖ Do. 9 : 18. ¶ Do. 23 : 14.

with these words;—"I concede, to interpret all the texts which exhibit *sheol* as having reference merely to the grave, is possible; and therefore it is possible to interpret" them "as designating a death *violent* and premature, inflicted by the hand of Heaven;"* and finally he concludes with these remarkable words:—"The sum of the evidence from the Old Testament, in regard to *sheol*, is, that the Hebrews did, PROBABLY, in *some* cases, *connect* with the use of this word, the idea of misery subsequent to the death of the body. It seems to me, that we may safely believe this; and to aver more than this, would be somewhat hazardous, when all the examples of the word are duly considered."†

This is, in fact, conceding the whole ground in debate; for if it is not safe to go farther than to regard the Hebrews as in *some* cases *connecting* the idea of future misery with this word, it is directly and explicitly abandoning it as the *name* of the *place* of endless misery, in the world of spirits, which is the very point in debate. This is a very important admission, and with it, we might dismiss the whole subject, so far as Universalism is concerned; for if the exhibitions of the word, in the Old Testament, are such, as to force from one professedly writing against this doctrine, such admissions, the case must be a sufficiently plain one.

* Exegetical Essays, p. 111. † Do., p. 114.

SECTION III.—AN EXHIBITION OF THE USAGE OF SHEOL.

In the Old Testament, we read on this wise:—

"What man liveth, and seeth not death?
Who can deliver himself from the power of the GRAVE?*

"And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, for I will go down into the GRAVE, unto my son mourning."† "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the GRAVE."‡

"The waters fail from the lake,
And the stream drieth up, and disappears;
So man lieth down, and riseth not;
Till the heavens be no more, he shall not awake,
Nor be roused from his sleep.
O that thou wouldst hide me in the UNDER-WORLD!
That thou wouldst conceal me till thy wrath be past!"§

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor

* Ps. 89: 48. I shall put the word answering to *sheol* in small capitals.

† Gen. 37: 35.

‡ Gen. 43: 38. I may also remark, that quotations from Hebrew poetry are from Prof. Noyes' translations, which I would commend to all lovers of Hebrew song.

§ Job 14: 11—13.

knowledge, nor wisdom in the GRAVE whither thou goest."*

"Therefore my heart is glad, and my spirit rejoiceth;
My flesh also dwelleth in security;
For thou wilt not give me up to the GRAVE;
Nor wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see the pit."†
"I cried, by reason of my distress, to Jehovah,
And he heard me;
Out of the depth of the UNDER-WORLD I cried,
And thou didst hear my voice."‡
"For thy kindness to me hath been great;
Thou hast delivered me from the very depths of the GRAVE."§
"But God will redeem my life from the GRAVE;
For he will take me under his protection."‖
"O Lord, thou hast raised me up from the GRAVE;
Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit."¶
"The Lord killeth, and maketh alive;
He bringeth down to the GRAVE, and bringeth up."**
"I will ransom them from the power of the GRAVE;
I will redeem them from death;
O death, I will be thy plague!
O GRAVE, I would be thy destruction!" ††

These texts may serve as a fair sample of the manner in which *sheol* is generally used in the Old Testament. Among the learned, I believe there is but one opinion as to its meaning in such connexions. All agree, that the term is used to designate "the under-world, the region of the dead, the grave, the sepulchre, the region of ghosts or departed spirits."‡‡ "It was considered as a vast and

* Eccl. 9: 10. † Ps. 16: 10. ‡ Jonah 2: 2.
§ Ps. 86: 13. ‖ Ps. 49: 15. ¶ Ps. 30: 3.
** 1 Sam. 2: 6. †† Hosea 13: 14.
‡‡ Stuart's Exegetical Essays, p. 77.

wide domain or region, of which the grave seems to have been as it were only a part, or a kind of entrance-way. It appears to have been regarded as extending deep down into the earth, even to its lowest abysses. . . . . In this boundless region lived and moved at times, the manes of departed friends."* Dr. Campbell says, it "signifies the state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of the persons, their happiness or misery. This state is always represented under those figures which suggest something dreadful, dark, and silent, about which the most prying eye, and listening ear, can acquire no information."†

"In the under-world of the Hebrews, there is something peculiarly grand and awful. It was an immense region, a vast subterranean kingdom, involved in thick darkness, filled with deep valleys, and shut up with strong gates; and from it there is no possibility of escape. Thither whole hosts of men went down at once; heroes and armies with all their trophies of victory; kings and their people were found there; where they had a sort of shadowy existence, as manes or ghosts, neither entirely spiritual nor entirely material, engaged in the employments of their earthly life, though destitute of strength and physical substance."‡

* Stuart's Exegetical Essays, p. 116.

† Prelim. Dissertations, Diss. 6, pt. 2, § 2.

‡ South's Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, p. 347. Andover, 1829.

Dr. Good's description of the ideas of mankind in the earlier ages, concerning the dead and their state, with a few exceptions, is true of the Hebrews, as presented in the use of *sheol* in the Old Testament. "It taught that the disembodied spirit becomes a ghost as soon as it is separated from the corporeal frame; a thin, misty, aerial form, somewhat larger than life, with a feeble voice, and shadowy limbs; knowledge superior to what it possessed while in the flesh; capable, under particular circumstances, of rendering itself visible, and retaining so much of its former features, as to be recognized upon its apparition;* in a few instances, wandering about for a certain period of time after death; but for the most part, conveyed to a common receptacle situated in the interior of the earth."†

* This was the idea commonly entertained, not only by the Orientals, but seems to have been the common notion of mankind generally and in all ages, if it is not something kindred to it even at the present time. A fine exhibition of the views of the dead, as held by the people of northern Europe, may be seen in Ossian's Poems. See the poem entitled Carric-Thura, on pp. 31—43. New York, 1835, 8vo.

"He lifted high his shadowy spear! He bent forward his dreadful height. Fingal, advancing, drew his sword; the blade of dark-brown Luno. The gleaming path of the steel winds through the gloomy ghost. The form fell shapeless into air, like a column of smoke, which the staff of the boy disturbs, as it rises from the half-extinguished furnace." p. 37. "The forms were empty winds." pp. 97, 112. "The stars dim-twinkled through his form." pp. 144, 284, 312, 336.

† Book of Nature, p. 335; New York, 1831. See also

That such were the ideas of the Hebrews, is sufficiently manifest, from the following texts, in addition to those already quoted; although it cannot be doubted, that some considerable change took place in their ideas, between the time in which the first and the last books of the Old Testament were written.

"Canst thou search out the deep things of God?
Canst thou reach the perfection of the Almighty?
'T is high as heaven, what canst thou do?
Deeper than HELL, what canst thou know?"*
"Whither shall I go from thy spirit,
And whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend into heaven, thou art there!
If I make my bed in HADES, behold, thou art there!"†
"Though they dig down to the LOWER WORLD,
Thence shall my hand take them."‡
"HADES beneath is in commotion on account of thee,
To meet thee at thy coming;
He stirreth up before thee the shades, all the mighty of the earth;
He arouseth from their thrones, all the kings of the nations;
They all accost thee, and say,
Art thou, too, become weak as we?
Art thou become like us?"§
"In the day when he went down to the GRAVE,
I caused the deep to mourn, I covered it for him.
At the sound of his fall I made the nations to shake,
When I cast him down to the GRAVE,
They also went down into the GRAVE with him,
To them that have been slain with the sword."‖
"The mightiest heroes from the midst of the PIT shall speak to him and his helpers;

Barnes' Introduction to his Notes on Job, pp. lxxxix—xciv. (10) where is a very full and accurate statement of the Hebrew views of the future state.

* Job 11 : 7—8. † Ps. 139 : 7, 8. ‡ Amos 9 : 2.
§ Isaiah 14 : 9, 10. ‖ Ezek. 31 : 15—17.

For they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.
Shall they not lie with the mighty of the uncircumcised that are fallen,
Who have gone down to the PIT with their weapons of war,
Having their swords laid under their heads,
And their iniquity resting upon their bones,
Though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living?"*

Comment upon such language as this, is quite unnecessary. It confirms, in the most plain and explicit manner, the views that have been advanced, in regard to the ideas of the Hebrews, concerning the realm of the dead, as indicated by the term *sheol.* These texts also show, that this term means something widely different from what the English word hell does, as now commonly used; though it is beyond all controversy, that "the word *hell* in its primitive signification perfectly corresponded" with that of *sheol.*†

Although all men go to *sheol* at death, it is often

* Ezek. 32 : 21 and 27.

† Campbell's Four Gospels, Prel. Diss. D. 6, P. 2, § 2. So Dr. A. Clarke, Com. on Matt. 11 : 23. So also Dr. Anthon, Class. Dic., Art. *Hades;* and Prof. Stuart's Exeget. Essays, p. 93.

Dr. Anthon says, "As regards the analogy between the term *hades* and our English word hell, it may be remarked, that the latter, in its primitive signification, perfectly corresponded to the former. For, at first, it denoted only what was secret or concealed; and it is found, moreover, with little variation of form, and precisely with the same meaning, in all the Teutonic dialects." This fact may serve to explain the singular use that is made of the term hell in our common version of the Scriptures.

represented as a punishment to be *sent* there, not that men are sent *there to be punished.* This was not the Hebrew idea, however it may be in fact. They regarded it a punishment in the same way that we now do to die. All men die; yet death is *sometimes* a punishment. It is so, when men are forced out of the world, for their crimes, by the executioner's hands. So when men were forced into *sheol* against their wills, in consequence of their sins, it was a punishment. Hence it is said, "The wicked are *driven* away in their wickedness;"* and that "the wicked shall be *thrust* into hell."†

* Prov. 14 : 32. ἀπωσθήσεται, from ἀπωθέω, *to thrust from*, implying the idea of force, as in driving away an enemy. Ps. 43 : 2.

† Ps. 9 : 17.

CHAPTER V.

THE GREEK WORD HADES, COMMONLY RENDERED HELL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, CONSIDERED AS AN OBJECTION TO UNIVERSALISM.

SECTION I.—PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

The word *hades* is commonly used, in the Greek version of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, as the rendering of the Hebrew word *sheol;* and it undoubtedly bears the same general meaning. Indeed, this is universally conceded at the present day, as it is also, in regard to the primitive meaning of our English word *hell.* But the two last of these words have undergone very considerable changes in their meaning, as we all know is the case in regard to our English word *hell;* and as will appear by a comparison of the New with the Old Testament usage of the term *hades.* To notice but one circumstance. In the New Testament, we find, in one case at least, an individual represented as lifting up his eyes in torment in *hades;** a representation to which there is nothing analogous in the Old Testament. But nothing is said as to the duration of this torment, even in this individual case.

* Luke 16 : 23.

Beside, neither in this or any other text where *hades* is used to represent a place of torment, can it bear the sense of endless; for everywhere in the Scriptures it is spoken of as a place that is to be destroyed. The following texts may serve as examples. "And death and HELL delivered up the dead which were in them. . . . And death and HELL were cast into the lake of fire."* "O death, where is thy sting? O GRAVE, where is thy victory?"† If this be true, how can this be a place of endless punishment? What will become of its miseries, when all its inhabitants shall be taken out of it; every knee brought to bow, and every tongue to confess to the glory of God; and when at last, both the place and its king shall be hurled into utter and irretrievable ruin, and a song of triumph sung over them? So plainly do the facts present this subject, that the most staunch believers and defenders of the doctrine of endless punishment, are forced to abandon this term as affording any proof of this doctrine. The most they will maintain is, that it is used to denote punishment in an intermediate state.‡ A time is to come when death and *hades* "are no more to exercise any power over the human race."§ Hence, there is no necessity for

* Rev. 20: 13, 14. † Cor. 15: 55.

‡ Campbell's Four Gospels, Diss. 6, P. 2, § 13. Exeget. Essays, p. 133.

§ Stuart's Exeget. Ess., p. 133. "The king of Hades, and Hades itself, i. e., the region or domains of death, are

entering into a lengthy discussion, to show that this term affords no argument in favor of the doctrine of eternal punishment. We may therefore give our entire attention to the consideration of what was really meant by this term, by mankind in the past ages of the world, and the opinions associated with it. This, I trust, will be a subject not altogether devoid of interest. It is one invested with great interest to every curious mind, that loves to know what men have thought in the past.

SECTION II.—CLASSICAL AND JEWISH USAGE OF THE TERM HADES.

"According to Grecian mythology, *hades* is the place of departed spirits." It is a word formed "from *a*, *not*, and *eidō*, *to see*, as denoting the lower or invisible world."* Prof. Stuart says, "*Hades*, in

represented as cast into the burning lake. The general judgment being now come, *mortality* having now been brought to a close, the tyrant death, and his domains along with him, are represented as cast into the burning lake, as objects of abhorrence and of indignation. They are no more to exercise any power over the human race."

"Whatever the state of either the righteous or the wicked may be, whilst in Hades, i. e., under the dominion of death, that state will certainly cease, and be exchanged for another, at the general resurrection." *Ibid.*, p. 136.

* Anthon's Class. Dic., Art. *Hades*.

the view of the Greeks and Romans, was the underworld, the world of the dead, a place deep in the earth, dark, cheerless; where everything was unsubstantial and shadowy."* A few passages from the poets will serve to verify these statements, and may not be uninteresting.

"Here in a lonely land, and gloomy cells,
The dusky nation of Cimmeria† dwells;
The sun ne'er views the uncomfortable seats,
When radiant he advances or retreats.
Unhappy race! whom endless night invades,
Clouds the dull air, and wraps them round in shades."‡

The guide of Æneas, after giving him certain directions in regard to preparing for his descent into *hades*, tells him,

"This done, securely take the destined way,
To find the regions destitute of day."§

This place, like the Hebrew *sheol*, is represented as shut up with gates, and, unlike the latter, guarded by sentinels.

"Wide is the fronting gate, and, raised on high
With adamantine columns, threats the sky.
Vain is the force of man, and heaven's as vain,
To crush the pillars which the pile sustain.
Sublime on these a tower of steel is reared;
And dire Tisiphone there keeps the ward,
Girt in her sanguine gown, by night and day,

* Exeget. Ess., p. 128.

† Cimmeria or Cimmerium, was an imaginary place, near the island of Æea, which island lay off the western coast of Sicily, and was the fabled abode of Circe and her companions."—*Stuart's Exeget. Ess.*, p. 124.

‡ Pope's Homer, Odys. xi. 15—20.

§ Dryden's Virgil, Æneid 6, 231.

Observant of souls that pass the downward way."*
"The gates of hell are open night and day;
Smooth the descent, and easy is the way."†
"Just in the gate, and in the jaws of hell,
Revengeful Cares and sullen Sorrows dwell,
And pale Diseases, and repining Age,
Want, Fear, and Famine's unresisted rage;
Here Toils, and Death, and Death's half-brother Sleep,
Forms terrible to view, their sentry keep;
With anxious pleasures of a guilty mind,
Deep Frauds before, and open Force behind;
The Furies' iron beds; and Strife, that shakes
Her hissing tresses, and unfolds her snakes.
Full in the midst of this infernal road,
An elm displays her dusky arms abroad;—
The god of sleep there hides his heavy head;
And empty dreams on ev'ry leaf are spread.
Of various forms unnumbered spectres move,
Centaurs, and double shapes, besiege the door.
Before the passage horrid Hydra stands,
And Briarius with all his hundred hands;
Gorgons, Geryon with his triple frame;
And vain Chimæra vomits empty flame."‡

This place, like *sheol*, is pervaded by rivers, one of which it was necessary to cross on entering it.

"Hence to deep Acheron§ they take their way,
Whose troubled eddies, thick with ooze and clay,
Are whirled aloft, and in Cocytus‖ lost.

* Dryden's Virgil, Æneid, vi. 744—751.
† Do. Æneid, vi. 192.
‡ Dryden's Virgil, Æneid, vi. 384—403.
§ "The poets make Acheron to have been the son of Sol and Terra, and to have been precipitated into the infernal regions and there changed into a river, for having supplied the Titans with water during the war which they waged with Jupiter. Hence its waters were muddy and bitter; and it was the stream over which the souls of the dead were first conveyed."—*Anthon's Class. Dic., Art. Acheron.*
‖ "Cocytus, a river of Epirus, which, according to Pausanias, blended its nauseous waters with those of the Acheron." The poets made it one of the rivers of the lower world. *Ibid., Art. Cocytus.*

There Charon stands, who rules the dreary coast—
A sordid god;—down from his hoary chin,
A length of beard descends, uncombed, unclean;—
His eyes, like hollow furnaces on fire:
A girdle, foul with grease, binds his obscene attire.
He spreads his canvass; with his pole he steers;
The freights of flitting ghosts in his thin bottom bears.
He look'd in years; yet, in his years were seen
A youthful vigor, and autumnal green."*

The inhabitants of this dreary realm were the unsubstantial shades of the dead, like those of *sheol*. Prof. Stuart says, "The manes were neither body nor spirit; but something intermediate, not palpable to any of the senses, except to the sight and hearing; pursuing the mere shadows of their occupations on earth, and incapable of any plans, enjoyments, or satisfaction which were substantial."† When Ulysses met his mother in the realm of the dead, he says,

"Thrice in my arms I strove her shade to bind,
Thrice through my arms she slip'd like empty wind,
Or dreams, the vain illusions of the mind.
Wild with despair, I shed a copious tide
Of flowing tears, and thus with sighs replied;
Fliest thou, loved shade, while I thus fondly mourn?
Turn to my arms, to my embraces turn!
Is it, ye powers that smile at human harms!
Too great a bliss to weep within her arms?
Or has hell's queen an empty image sent,
That wretched I might ev'n my joys lament?
Oh son of woe! the pensive shade rejoin'd,
Oh most inured to grief of all mankind!
'T is not the queen of hell who thee deceives;
All, all are such, when life the body leaves.
No more the substance of the man remains,

* Dryden's Virgil, Æneid, vi. 410—421.
† Exeget. Ess., p. 218.

Nor bounds the blood along the purple veins;
These the funereal flames in atoms bear,
To wander with the wind in empty air;
While the impassive soul reluctant flies,
Like a vain dream, to these infernal skies."*
"Comest thou alive to view the Stygian bounds,
Where the wan spectres walk eternal rounds;
Nor fear'st the dark and dismal waste to tread,
Thronged with pale ghosts, familiar with the dead?"†

"The dead, without distinction of good or evil, age or rank, wander there, conversing about their former state on earth; they are unhappy, and they feel their wretched state acutely. They have no strength or power of body or mind. . . . Nothing can be more gloomy and comfortless than the whole aspect of the realm of *hades*, as pictured by Homer."‡ Hence, when Ulysses congratulated Achilles on account of the honorable position he held in this realm, his reply is,—

"Talk not of ruling in this dolorous gloom,
Nor think vain words, he cried, can ease my doom.
Rather I'd choose laboriously to bear
A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,
A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,
Than reign the sceptred monarch of the dead."§
"The chief beheld their chariots from afar,
Their shining arms, and coursers trained to war,
Their lances fix'd in earth—their steeds around,
Free from their harness, graze the mimic‖ ground.

* Pope's Homer, Odys., xi. 248—268. † Do. xi. 583—586.
‡ Anthon's Class. Dic., Art. *Pluto*.
§ Pope's Homer, Odyssey, xi. 595—600.
‖ I have substituted "*mimic*," from Dr. Good's translation, as more in conformity with the spirit of the passage, than "*flow'ry*," which Pope uses.—*Book of Nature*, p. 336. *New York*. 1831.

The love of horses which they had, alive,
And care of chariots, after death survive."*

"In the Homeric times, the prevalent belief was merely as follows; that the souls of the departed, with the exception of those who had personally offended against the gods, were occupied in the lower world with the unreal performances of the same actions that had formed their chief objects of pursuit in the regions of day."† "Some few, enemies of the gods, such as Sisyphus, Tityus, Tantalus, are punished for their crimes, but not apart from the rest of the dead."‡

"In process of time, when communication with Egypt and Asia had enlarged the sphere of the ideas of the Greeks, the nether world underwent a total change. It was now divided into two separate regions; Tartarus, which, in the time of Homer and Hesiod, was thought to lie far beneath it, and to be the prison of the Titans, became one of these regions, and the place of punishment for wicked men; and Elysium, which lay on the shore of the stream of Ocean, the retreat of the children and relatives of the king of the gods, was moved down thither to form the place of reward for good men."§

According to "the new-modified under-world," in the days of Virgil, *Hades* was the residence of souls, to prepare them to reänimate new bodies in

* Dryden's Virgil, Æneid, vi., 885—890.
†Anthon's Class. Dic., Art. *Hades*. ‡ Do. Art. *Pluto*. § Do.

this world. "The River of Oblivion" was introduced, of which the dead were to drink, that they might forget the past, before taking possession of new bodies.*

"Now, in a secret vale, the Trojan sees
A sep'rate grove, through which a gentle breeze
Plays with a passing breath, that whispers through the trees;
And, just before the confines of the wood,
The gliding Lethe leads her silent flood.
About the boughs an airy nation flew,
Thick as the humming bees, that hunt the golden dew
In summer's heat; on tops of lilies feed,
And creep within their bells, to suck the balmy seed;—
The winged army roams the field around;
The rivers and the rocks remurmur to the sound.
Æneas wond'ring stood, then ask'd the cause
Which to the stream the crowding people draws.
Then thus the sire;—The souls that throng the flood,
Are those to whom, by Fate, are other bodies owed.
In Lethe's lake they long oblivion taste,
Of future life secure, forgetful of the past.
. . . . . .
O Father! can it be, that souls sublime
Return to visit our terrestrial clime,
And that the gen'rous mind, released by death,
Can covet lazy limbs, and mortal breath?"

In reply Anchises goes into a very particular statement of the reasons for such an arrangement, and among other things says,

"———; nor can the grovelling mind,
In the dark dungeon of the limbs confined,

* "In the sixth book of Virgil's Æneid will be found the richest and fullest description of the new-modified underworld, and for those who love to trace the progress and change of ideas, it will not be an uninteresting employment to compare it with that in the eleventh book of Homer's Odyssey." Anthon's Class. Dic., Art. *Pluto.*

Assert the native skies, or own its heav'nly kind;
Nor death itself can wholly wash their stains;
But long-contracted filth ev'n in the soul remains.
The relics of invet'rate vice they wear;
And spots of sin obscene in ev'ry face appear.
For this are various penances enjoin'd;
Some are hung to bleach upon the wind,
Some plunged in waters, others purged in fires,
Till all the dregs are drain'd, and all the rust expires.
All have their manes, and those manes bear;—
The few, so cleansed, to these abodes repair,
And breathe. in ample fields, the soft Elysian air.
Then they are happy, when by length of time
The scurf is worn away of each committed crime;
No speck is left of their habitual stains;
But the pure ether of the soul remains.
But, when a thousand rolling years are past,—
So long their punishments and penance last,—
Whole droves of minds are, by the driving god,
Compell'd to drink the deep Lethean flood,
In large forgetful draughts, to steep the cares
Of their past labors and their irksome years,
That, unremember'ring of its former pain,
The soul may suffer mortal flesh again."*

Such were the views entertained by the most enlightened heathen nations, of the realm of the dead. And nothing can be more obvious to any one who goes into a careful examination of the subject, than that the views of the Greeks and Romans underwent a gradual change, relative to *hades*, between the days of Homer and those of Virgil. A similar change took place in the Hebrew mind, between the days of Moses and those of our Saviour, so that, in his times, the opinions of the Jews, concerning the world of spirits, very nearly coincided with

* Dryden's Virgil, Æneid, vi., 953—1020.

those entertained by the Greeks and the Romans, as above described.* There was, probably, some diversity of opinion among them; but these, or opinions very nearly like them, generally prevailed in the times of the Saviour, among the Pharisees in particular. Unlike both the Greeks in Homer's time, and the Hebrews in the days of Moses and the prophets, both the Greeks and Jews of these later periods, divided *hades* into two parts, the place of happiness and the place of misery. So, too, both came to believe, that, after a certain number of years, souls returned to the earth to inhabit other bodies.† "The Jews did not, indeed, adopt the pagan fables, on this subject, nor did they express themselves, entirely, in the same manner; but the general train of thinking, in both, came pretty much to coincide. The Greek *hades* they found well adapted to ex-

* Campbell's Four Gospels, Diss. 6, Pt. 2, § 19.

† "The prevalent and distinguishing opinion was, that the soul survived the body, that vicious souls would suffer an everlasting imprisonment in *hades*, and that the souls of the virtuous would both be happy there, and, in process of time, obtain the privilege of transmigrating into other bodies. . . . . That this Pythagorian dogma was become pretty general among the Jews, appears even from some passages in the Gospels." Campbell's Four Gospels, Diss. 6, Pt. 2, § 19. So of the Pharisees, it is said by Josephus—"They also believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them, and that, under the earth, there will be rewards and punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again." Antiquities, B. 18, Ch. 1, § 3. Whiston's Tr.

press the Hebrew *sheol*. This they came to conceive as including different sorts of habitations, for ghosts of different characters. And, though they did not receive the terms *Elysium*, or *Elysian fields*, as suitable appellations for the regions peopled by good spirits, they took, instead of them, as better adapted to their own theology, *the garden of Eden, or Paradise*, a name originally Persian, by which the word answering to *garden*, especially when applied to Eden, had commonly been rendered, by the Seventy. To denote the same state, they sometimes used the phrase *Abraham's bosom*, a metaphor borrowed from the manner in which they reclined at meals. But, on the other hand, to express the unhappy situation of the wicked, in that intermediate state, they do not seem to have declined the use of the word *tartarus*."*

So much for the classical and Jewish usage of the term *hades;* from which it appears, by the facts presented and the best authority, that the ideas of the Greeks and Romans, and those of the Jews of our Saviour's time, very nearly coincided. It now remains for us to examine the New Testament usage of this term.

* Campbell's Four Gospels, Diss. 6, Pt. 2, § 19.

SECTION III.—NEW TESTAMENT USAGE OF THE TERM HADES.

Having exhibited the classical and Jewish view of the meaning of the term *hades*, the question very naturally arises,—Did the writers of the New Testament use it in the same sense? I say the New Testament, because it is with this alone that we are now concerned; as the Old Testament representation of the under-world was exhibited in the consideration of the meaning of the term *sheol*.

I think no man, who has paid the slightest attention to the manner in which this term is used in the New Testament, can, for one moment, doubt, what answer to return to this question. Such a person must admit, that so far as usage is concerned, the evidence is most conclusive, that the writers of the New Testament used this term, neither in precisely the same sense as the classics, nor yet in that of the Jews of their time; but in the more general sense of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, and entirely in conformity with the earlier usage of the Hebrew word *sheol*, for the *state of the dead in general*, as beneath the surface of the ground. An example or two will verify this view. "Thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to *hades*;"* i. e.,

* Matt. 11: 23.

you who are exalted to the highest point of grandeur and magnificence, and enjoy the highest privileges, shall be brought down to lowest depths of degradation and ruin. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in *hades;* nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption;"* i. e., thou wilt not permit my spirit to remain in the state of the dead, until my body shall decay. Hence Prof. Stuart says, "We here find it sometimes employed in almost or quite a *literal* sense, i. e., as meaning *world beneath, under-world;* sometimes in a sense similar to that of *Orcus* or *Infernus*, i. e., the place of departed souls; and sometimes in the sense of *kingdom* or *region of the dead.*"† And afterwards he adds—"That the Hebrews used the Greek word *hades*, so as to correspond in general with their *sheol*, is quite plain. . . . . We can no more argue that *hades*, as used by them, did in all respects mean the same as it did among the Greeks, than we can argue in like manner in regard to the use of the words *theos*, *angelos*, *soter*,"‡ etc.

So much for the general sense in which the writers of the New Testament used the term *hades.* But although they commonly used it in perfect conformity with the Old Testament usage of *sheol*, yet there are instances in which it seems to me, the New Testament writers used it in a sense peculiar to themselves. They seem to have used it in more

* Acts 2 : 31. † Exeget. Ess., p. 129. ‡ Ibid., p. 136.

of a spiritual sense, for the state of the dead, without any reference to the locality—whether it is in the sky, under the earth, or somewhere else. This seems a necessary inference from the general character of their language, in reference to a future state. Hence, when Christ rose from the dead and went to heaven, he is represented as going *up* into heaven.* So Stephen, when he was stoned, looked *up* into heaven and saw God and Christ.† So St. Paul says "he was caught *up* into paradise."‡ So too, it is asked—"Who shall *ascend* into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down, or who shall *descend*, into the deep? that is, to bring Christ up again from the dead."§ How are we to reconcile this language with the prevalent view, that both the place of happiness and that of misery are *down* beneath the surface of the ground? It appears to me, the only way to solve the difficulty is, to suppose they used the term *hades*, in a modified sense, for the world of spirits, the same as they have the word *anastasis*, translated in our common version, resurrection, in the general sense of *future life*, without reference to the *manner* of attaining it.‖

* Mark 6: 9. Luke 24: 15. † Acts 7: 55.
‡ 2 Cor. 12: 2—4. § Rom. 10: 7.
‖ The word ἀνάστασις was used by the Jews in the times of our Saviour to designate a sort of *metempsychosis* or transmigration of souls; while nothing can be more obvious, than that no such thing was intended by it, as used by Christ and his apostles. Campbell's Four Gospels, Dis. 6,

There is one instance of a peculiar usage of the term in question. Unlike all other passages in which it occurs, it represents an individual as lifting up his eyes in torment, in *hades*. Standing out by itself as it does, an exception to all other occurrences of the word, it seems but just that it receive especial attention. A separate section, therefore, will be devoted to its consideration.

SECTION IV.—EXPOSITION OF LUKE 16: 23.

The language of this text is—"The rich man also died; and in HELL he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." The connection in which these words are found, and the discourse of which it makes a part, is confessedly a parable; and it will at once be perceived, by every one who will take the pains to read it with any tolerable degree of attention, that it was addressed to the Jews, who persisted in the rejection of Jesus, as the Messiah, in the face, and in defiance, of the clearest and most convincing testimony. And not only so, but they perverted the teachings of Moses, and the prophets, so as to answer their own base and selfish designs

Pt. 2, § 19. "The immortality of human souls, and the transmigration of the good, seem to have been all they comprehended in the phrase *αναστασις των νεκρων*. Indeed, the words strictly denote no more than the renewal of life."

and purposes. Hence the parable closes with these words ;—" If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." To illustrate this fact, the parable was uttered—their perversity, and their hardened and determined obstinacy. And the statement was fully demonstrated, by their subsequent conduct, in relation to the resurrection of Jesus himself. They had no more faith in him after his resurrection, than they had before. It was to rebuke them for their perverseness and obstinacy, that this parable was spoken. This was its main design, while, perhaps, in its arrangement, there was a subordinate purpose, to expose and rebuke some of their theological opinions, which had a direct bearing upon their practices, with a peculiar reference to their future condition.

The whole parable, I regard a sort of *argumentum ad hominem*, as the logicians say; or an argument against them, drawn from their own admitted doctrines and notions. Jesus does not state his own belief upon this subject; but admits, for the sake of the argument, their peculiar notions about the future state, without intending to sanction them as true thereby. He then takes two individuals, one whose character and circumstances were perfectly conformable to their ideas of moral rectitude. A man who enjoyed all the advantages of wealth, so far as position in society and leisure to seek his own

good and happiness were concerned—one who was chargeable with no particular immoralities or crimes; an individual we should now term a very good, moral sort of a man, who did no one any particular good or hurt; an inefficient, good-natured, harmless, unconcerned sort of a character, intent upon securing his own selfish gratification; a man who was disposed to do a favor for a fellow if he came in his way, and it would not cost him too much effort, or interfere very much with his own ease or pleasure; a man who lived chiefly to pamper his appetites and passions, without concerning himself much about other people's happiness or misery. Such a selfish mortal, as a Jew, they supposed, when dead, and his body composed in the tomb, was sure of entering into the society and becoming a favorite of Abraham in the future world.

He then introduces another individual in contrast with this man, whose condition and circumstances are as different as possible. He is a miserable beggar, whose body was a mass of disease. He was so covered with ulcers, that he was an object of loathing and abhorrence to all who might approach him. In the eye of a Jew, the very circumstance of an individual's being in so miserable a condition, was the most conclusive evidence, that he had been guilty of some enormous and shocking crime,* for

* Luke 13: 1—5. See Kenrick's remarks on this place. Also Barnes, Livermore, Paige and others *in loco*.

which he was doomed to drag out a miserable existence here, as a prelude to a more miserable existence hereafter.

Both of these men die. One in his splendid mansion, surrounded by friends and magnificence to minister to his wants and soothe the pangs of mortal disease, and he is buried in pomp and splendor; while the other departs in loneliness, and is either denied the rite of burial, or hurried away to his grave by his few poor and destitute friends, or by some stranger, in so private a manner, that the event is unnoticed.

Jesus then changes the scene from this to the world of the dead, as their imaginations had conceived it, and there presents them with these individuals in circumstances entirely reversed. The rich man now is in miserable circumstances, and becomes the one to ask favors of him who had been deemed unfit to be received into his mansion on earth. All this was subordinate to the main design of the parable, to expose to them their false views of the means of securing future bliss; to show them, that according to their own views of a future world, they had entirely mistaken the grounds of admittance to a condition of happiness in that state; that instead of being what they had supposed, a faithful observance of the rites of the ceromonial law, a descendance from Abraham, and a decent regard to the laws of morality—a sort of negative

goodness—it demands a positive goodness—purity and benevolence of heart, which looks beyond self and selfish gratifications, upon the great world of suffering humanity, and will prompt the individual to active efforts for human good—efforts that will demand some sacrifice of personal ease and selfish gratification.

A conversation is then introduced, as being carried on between Abraham and this rich man, who mutually acknowledge each other as father and son, in allusion, probably, to the fact of his being a true son of the Jewish church, first in relation to his own condition, and then in reference to his Jewish brethren. These, he evidently regarded, as on the direct road to the same condition as he very unexpectedly found himself in; and that the only way for them to escape, was by reformation, for which he manifested no little anxiety. This was the point at which the whole parable is aimed—to show, that according to their own views, the whole of them were on the direct road to a place of misery, which they had supposed expressly fitted up and solely for heathens and some exceedingly wicked persons; such as suicides, and those guilty of enormous and shocking crimes; and that they were so wrapped up and deluded with self-righteousness, and so full of obstinacy, that they would hearken to no warning voice, not even of one from the dead. Such is my view of the meaning of this

parable. But I do not suppose that Jesus meant, in this, to sanction their views of the future world as true, more than the writer of the Acts of the Apostles intended to be understood as admitting the reality of the existence and supernatural power of the heathen deity, Apollo, in saying that a certain girl was possessed of the spirit of Python.* It was merely confuting some of their errors and rebuking their obstinacy, by admitting their own opinions. And this was most effectually done, in putting the rebuke into the mouth of their father Abraham, on whose account they claimed such high prerogatives.

How far this parable may be urged in favor of the opinion, that the consequences of sin do extend beyond this life, may, perhaps, be a question. Although I believe, most firmly, that the consequences of sin do extend beyond this life, I cannot rely upon this text as proof of it. I think it no evidence that Jesus entertained such a view, because the whole structure of the story recognizes and is founded upon the common opinions of the Jews and heathens, which were substantially the same, and I cannot bring myself to believe, that he meant to be understood, as teaching, that these views were in conformity with the actual state of things in the world of spirits.

In regard to the idea, that this text teaches the

* See p. 61, of this work, note.

doctrine of endless misery, nothing can be more groundless; for not a word is said or intimated, as to the *duration* of the states of either of these men. That, of necessity, depended upon their *continuing* to sustain their respective characters, even if the parable was designed as an express recognition of the truth of the doctrine of future punishment.* Beside this, there is no truth more clearly revealed in the Bible, than that *hades* itself is to be destroyed, and a song of triumph sung over it by man.†

In regard to the impassable gulf, upon which the idea, that the punishment mentioned in this parable is to be endless, there is really no argument afforded by it, in favor of this opinion, even admitting it was designed to recognize the truth of the doctrine of future punishment; because there is just as impassable a gulf between the good and the bad in this world, as in the next. A good man, while good, can no more enter into the state of the bad here, than he can hereafter; nor the bad into that of the good. Still all admit, that those now bad men *may* get into the state of the good any time, while they remain in this world at least. Indeed, it is one of the leading aims of the gospel to secure this, by removing this great gulf out of the way, which it does by converting *bad* into *good*

* See pp. 129—133, of this work.
† See p. 172 of this work, note.

men. Hence we read of men's passing from death unto life ;* and of their being translated from the kingdom of darkness into that of God's dear Son.† It is not man's outward condition, which constitutes his essential happiness or misery, as a moral being ; but his inward state. The only obstacle in the way of any man's entrance into a state of happiness, is his own *moral condition.* This is the impassable gulf fixed in every wicked man's path, and the only one in any world; not an outward barrier. So that, although this gulf is impassable, a way is provided by which it may be removed out of every man's path. Let him become a good man and it will vanish away, no matter where he is, whether in this world or the next.

* John 5 : 24. † Col. 1 : 13.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GREEK WORD TARTARUS, RENDERED HELL IN OUR COMMON VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, CONSIDERED AS AN OBJECTION TO UNIVERSALISM.

THE word *Tartarus** does not occur in the Scriptures at all; "but a denominative verb, *tartaroō*,† which means to send to Tartarus, to confine in Tartarus, to punish in Tartarus, occurs in" one place.‡ "Here it is said, that God spared not the angels who sinned, but confining them in Tartarus, he put them in chains of darkness, incarcerated for trial or kept for judgment."§ This is an exceedingly tame rendering of the original, and falls very far short of giving anything like its full force. A more literal rendering would be, "but hurled them down to hell;"‖ or "thrust them down to Tartarus."¶ The term *tartarosas*** conveys the idea of violence or force directed against the wishes and efforts of an antagonist.

In the Greek mythology, Tartarus was "the fabled place of punishment in the lower world.

* τάρταρος. † ταρταρόω. ‡ 2 Pet. 2 : 4.
§ Stuart's Exeget. Ess., p. 137.
‖ Donnegan's Lex., in ταρταρόω.
¶ Robinson's Greek Lex. Ibid. ** ταρταρώσας.

According to the ideas of the Homeric and Hesiodic ages, it would seem that the world or universe was a hollow globe, divided into two equal portions by the flat disk of the earth. The external shell of this globe is called by the poets *brazen* and iron, probably only to express its solidity. The superior hemisphere was named Heaven, and the inferior one Tartarus. The length of the diameter of the hollow sphere is given thus by Hesiod. It would take, he says, nine days for an anvil to fall from Heaven to Earth; and an equal space of time would be occupied by its fall from Earth to the bottom of Tartarus. The luminaries which give light to gods and men, shed their radiance through all the interior of the upper hemisphere, while that of the inferior one was filled with eternal darkness, and its still air was unmoved by any wind. Tartarus was regarded, at this period, as the prison of the gods, and not as the place of torment for wicked men; being to the gods, what Erebus was to men, the abode of those who were driven from the supernal world. The Titans, when conquered, were shut up in it, and Jupiter menaces the gods with banishment to its murky regions. The Oceanus of Homer encompassed the whole earth, and beyond it was a region unvisited by the sun, and therefore shrouded in perpetual darkness, the abode of a people whom he names Cimmerians. Here the poet of the Odyssey also places Erebus, the realm of

Pluto and Proserpina, the final dwelling-place of all the race of men, a place which the poet of the Iliad describes as lying within the bosom of the earth. At a later period, the change of religions gradually affected Erebus, the place of the reward of the good; and Tartarus was raised up, to form the prison in which the wicked suffered the punishment due to their crimes."*

Prof. Stuart says, "Tartarus is employed, in Greek, to designate a supposed subterranean region, as deep down below the upper part of Hades as the earth is distant from heaven."† A few passages from the classics relating to this subject, may not be altogether uninteresting. Jupiter is represented as forbidding all the gods from interfering in a battle about to be fought, and threatening them, if disobedient, in these words,—

"What god but enters yon forbidden field,
Who yields assistance, or but wills to yield,
Back to the skies, with shame, he shall be driven,
Gash'd with dishonest wounds, the scorn of heaven.
Or far, oh far from steep Olympus thrown,
Low in the dark Tartarean gulf shall groan,
With burning chains fix'd to the brazen floors,
And lock'd by hell's inexorable doors;
As deep beneath the infernal centre hurled,
As from that centre to the ethereal world."‡

In speaking of this place Virgil makes nearly the same representation, and describes it only as the place where the gods are punished.

* Anthon's Class. Dic., Art. *Tartarus*. † Essays, p. 137.
‡ Pope's Homer, Iliad, B. viii. 11—20.

"'T is here, in diff'rent paths, the way divides;—
The right to Pluto's golden palace guides,
The left to that unhappy region tends,
Which to the depths of Tartarus descends—
The seat of night profound and punished fiends.
. . . . . .
The gaping gulf low to the centre lies,
And twice as deep as earth is distant from the skies.
The rivals of the gods, the Titan race,
Here, singed with lightning, roll within th' unfathomed space."*

From what has been said, it will be seen, that Tartarus is only a part of Hades. According to the older classics, it was the place where the gods only were confined. But in later times it came to be regarded as a place of punishment for wicked men. Hence, Prof. Stuart says;—"It is not improbable that the general conception of Hades, as meaning the region of the dead, comprised both an Elysium and a Tartarus, or a state of happiness and a state of misery."† That such was the fact in the more modern times, particularly among the Jews, admits of little doubt.

Now the question is, did the apostle, in the text under consideration, mean to be understood to teach the same doctrine as the heathen and the Jews of his time held? Did he mean to be understood to say, that, beneath the surface of the ground, there was a vast region, to which all men go at death, and that that region was divided into a place of

* Dryden's Virgil, Æneid vi. 726—783. † Essays, p. 135.

happiness and a place of misery? If he adopted the heathen or Jewish ideas upon this subject, between whom there was little difference, except in the use of terms, such must have been what he meant. But who will pretend to defend such an opinion? I hardly think any one can be found willing to accept such a christianized heathenism. Beside, if the apostle intended to describe a place of future punishment by the use of this word, it must have been regarded merely as temporary; for these angels were only confined there to await their trial. Such a confinement, of course, is limited in its duration, whatever may follow the trial.

The term Tartarus "is occasionally employed, in the later classic writers, for the under-world in general."* In other words, it is employed to signify not the prison of Hades alone, but the same as Hades itself. So similiar is it to the language in one of the Psalms, that one is almost forced to think the apostle had that text in his mind when he penned this. "The wicked shall be turned into hell."† That is, they should come to a violent death—should be forced out of this world and into the future, against their wills and efforts. So these angels, be they what they may, were forced out of the state or mode of existence in which they were, into another and untried condition. This view of its meaning is confirmed by the circumstance, that it is

* Stuart's Exeget. Ess., p. 137. † Ps. 9: 17.

described as a place of darkness. "Delivered them into chains of darkness." This goes strongly to confirm the opinion, that Tartarus is here used in the sense of *sheol* and *hades;* for these terms always denote a place of darkness.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEBREW-GREEK WORD GEHENNA ALWAYS RENDERED HELL IN THE COMMON VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, CONSIDERED AS AN OBJECTION TO UNIVERSALISM.

SECTION I.—PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE term Gehenna is the one universally fixed upon by the advocates of the "absolute eternity" of punishment, as the name of the place where it is to be inflicted, "That *gehenna* is employed in the New Testament, to denote the place of future punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels, is indisputable. This is the sense, if I mistake not, in which *Gehenna* is always to be understood in the New Testament, where it occurs just twelve times."* "It is a word peculiar to the Jews, and was employed by them some time before the coming of Christ, to denote that part of *sheol* which was the habitation of the wicked after death. This is proved by the fact of its familiar use in the New Testament, and by the fact of its being found in the apocrypha books and Jewish Targums, some of which were written before the time of our Sa-

* Campbell's Four Gospels, Diss. 6, Pt. 2, § 1.

viour."* By future punishment is here intended endless punishment.

Such is the ground assumed by the believers in the doctrine of endless punishment, and the question is—Is it well founded? It is admitted, that the Pharisees and the Essenes, in the times of our Saviour, believed in the endless punishment of the wicked, and the question to be settled is—Did they use the term *Gehenna* to describe the *place* where this punishment was to be inflicted? That it was used by the Jews, some hundreds of years after Christ, to designate the place of the damned, is freely admitted. "It is admitted, that the Jews of a later date, used the word Gehenna to denote Tartarus, that is, the place of infernal punishment."† The Christians of the second century so understood the matter. Clemens Alexandrinus says—"Does not Plato acknowledge both the rivers of fire, and that profound depth of the earth which the barbarians‡ call Gehenna? Does he not mention prophetically, Tartarus, Cocytus, Acheron, the Phlegethon of fire, and certain other places of punishment, which lead to correction and discipline?"§

But the question is not what were the facts in regard to the usage of this term some centuries after Christ. It is—What are they as presented at

* Tract 224, p. 31. † Stuart's Exeget. Ess., p. 141.
‡ By barbarians, is here intended the Jews.
§ Universalist Expositor, Vol. 2, pp. 366, 367.

and before his time? The whole force of the argument, *a priori* as it is, depends upon its being made out by fair and unexceptionable testimony—by witnesses which cannot be impeached—that the term gehenna was so used at that precise time. Testimony as to what was the state of the case at a subsequent period, is only a *presumption* as to what was the fact at that time. It is only an argument *a posteriori*, which would be entitled to considerable weight, if not arrested by any conflicting circumstances, belonging to that earlier period.

Now the appeal is made, to sustain the position, that Gehenna is used as the *name* of the *place* of infernal punishment by the Jews, as we have seen, to certain Jewish writings, called the Targums and the Talmuds,* and also to the apocryphal writings of the Old Testament. There are two questions to be settled in regard to these writings, before they can be admitted as testimony in the case. The first is—Is this term found in these writings? If so, were they written about the time or before the days of our Saviour? If both these questions are answered in the affirmative, and it occurs in

* It may here be remarked, that the Targums are translations of the Old Testament into Chaldee, though they are, in fact, in many instances, mere paraphrases of the original. The word Targum means translation. Horn's Intro., Vol. 2, p. 157. Phil. 1831. The Talmuds are a collection of Jewish traditions, called the Mishna, to which are attached comments, called the Gemara, for their elucidation. Prideaux's Connexions, Vol. 1, p. 269. Baltimore, 1833.

such a sense, then the witness is competent to testify in the case; and if unequivocal, it must settle the question; but if not, the testimony cannot be accepted. It must be rejected as inapposite to the case.

That the word occurs in the Targums and Talmuds, I believe is admitted on all hands, and the question is,—When were they written? Do they belong to a period about the time of our Saviour, or not? The whole matter depends upon the answer to this question. Is it *certain*, then, that these writings were composed before or about the commencement of the Christian era? I answer, no. Their date is extremely uncertain, as an appeal to the statements of the critics will show.

The oldest of these writings in which the term Gehenna occurs, in the sense of a place of future punishment, is the Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel, where it is said to occur several times in this sense. To what age does this book belong? "Most of the eminent critics now agree, that it could not have been completed till some time between two and four hundred years after Christ."* "Neither the language nor the method of interpretation is the same in all the books. In the historical works, the text is translated with greater accuracy than elsewhere; in some of the prophets, as in Zechariah, the interpretation has more of the Rabbinical and Talmudical

* Univ. Expos., Vol. 2, p. 368.

character. From this variety we may properly infer, that the work is a collection of interpretations of several learned men, made toward the close of the third century, and containing some of a much older date; for that some parts of it existed as early as in the second century, appears from the additions which have been transferred from some Chaldee paraphrase into the Hebrew text, and were already in the text in the second century."* Others have assigned its date to the third, fourth, and even as late as the eighth century.†

Thus it will be seen, that the date of this book is exceedingly uncertain, and that all that can be adduced to establish this point, is little better than mere conjecture. Now a book, the date of which is so extremely uncertain as this is, cannot be very good evidence of the usage of a word at a specific time, in the absence of all other testimony. Especially is this the case, when we know a very great change took place in the opinions and phraseology of the Jews, between that period and the earliest date assigned this book by any sober and judicious critic.‡ It has been well said, that "from

* Jahn's Intro. to the O. T., p. 66. Horne's Intro., Vol. 2, p. 160.

† Univ. Expos., Vol. 2, p. 368.

‡ Perhaps an exception should be made of Gesenius, who maintains the higher antiquity of this work; but his views are not adopted by the more recent German critics. They still adhere to the opinion of its later date.

the time of Josephus onwards, there is an interval of about a century, from which no Jewish writings have descended to us. This was a period of dreadful change and ruin with that distracted people. Their body politic was dissolved; the whole system of their ceremonial religion had been crushed in the fall of their city and temple; and they themselves, scattered abroad, were accursed on all the face of the earth. In these circumstances, it was natural that their sentiments and usages should undergo a rapid modification; and if we may judge from the state in which we find their doctrine, when their own compositions again appear in view, they adopted almost every conceit, provided it were sufficiently extravagant and ridiculous, that ever crossed the brain of a mad-man."*

In regard to the Talmuds, they are no better authority in the case, than the Targums. They are assigned to no earlier a period than the second century. There are two of these works, the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonish. "The former was completed about the year of our Lord three hundred; and the latter was published about two hundred years after, in the beginning of the sixth century."† So far as the apocryphal books of the Old Testament are concerned, the term Gehenna is not to be

* Universalist Expos., Vol. 2., p. 366.
† Prideaux's Connexions, Vol. 1, p. 269. Horne's Intro., Vol. 2, p. 296—297.

found in them, notwithstanding they have so often been appealed to as affording testimony in the case.*

Thus it will be seen, that there is an entire absence of decided and unequivocal testimony, aside from the New Testament, to show that Gehenna, in the times of our Saviour, was the name of a place of endless punishment. The case may be stated in this way. Before his day, the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, where the word had its origin. The Septuagint translation of the Old Testament was made some two hundred years before his birth, where the word is found, with some variation of spelling. In both of these works Gehenna is never used as the name of a place of punishment in the future world. Cotemporary, or nearly so, with Jesus and his apostles, was Philo Judæus, in whose writings, now extant, the word is not to be found. Immediately after Christ, Josephus composed his works; and although he treats par-

* I hardly know how to explain this circumstance; for the statement has been made by men who had both the learning and the means of knowing better. One thing is certain, and that is, that such men have no apology that can justify such a misstatement to common readers, who have not the means of detecting it. In the Apocrypha the word hell occurs in the following places, and is a rendering of Hades, instead of Gehenna, as I can testify from a personal examination. Tobit, 13 : 2; Wisdom, 16 : 13; 17 : 14; (13 of the Sep.;) Eccles. 21 : 10; 51 : 5, 6; Dan. 3 : 66. It occurs also in 2 Esd. 2 : 29; 4 : 9; 8 : 53; but as this book exists only in the Latin, it is no authority in the case.

ticularly of the different sects among the Jews, and gives a very full description of their doctrines, he never used the term. Now had Gehenna, in his time, been used by the Jews as the name of the place of endless punishment, in which the Pharisees believed, is it supposable, that he would not have used it, in describing their opinions?

Beside all this, the ideas of the Jews, as exhibited in the writings of the Apocrypha, Philo and Josephus, in reference to punishment, were such that they could not have used Gehenna as the name of the place in which it was to be inflicted, in the future world. "If we misjudge not, both the Apocrypha, and the works of Philo, when compared together, afford circumstantial evidence that the word cannot have been currently employed, during their age, to denote a place of future torment. . . . From the few traces which remain to us of this age, it seems that the idea of future punishment, such as it was among the Jews, was associated with that of darkness, and not of fire; and that among those of Palestine, the misery of the wicked was supposed to consist rather in privation, than in positive infliction. . . . But we cannot discover, in Josephus, that either of these sects," the Pharisees or the Essenes, both of which believed the doctrine of endless misery, "supposed it to be a state of fire, or that the Jews ever alluded to it by that emblem. In addition, therefore, to the absence of all proof that they

had as yet named it Gehenna, we find their notions of it to have been such as would not comport with the term, in its later usage."*

Such are the facts in the case, and how they can be reconciled with the position, that Gehenna, in our Saviour's day, had come to signify a place of punishment, in the world of spirits, I cannot see. They present the strongest kind of negative proof that the word then had attained no such signification. At any rate, no direct evidence has yet been adduced, and I believe none can be, aside from the New Testament, of its ever being used in such a sense at that time. This is fatal to the *a priori* argument, that it bears this meaning in the New Testament, and throws the whole matter upon the New Testament itself.

SECTION II.—THE DERIVATION OF GEHENNA.

"It is originally a compound of the two Hebrew words *ge hinnom*,† the valley of Hinnom, a place near Jerusalem, of which we hear first in the book of Joshua.‡ It was there that the cruel sacrifices of children were made by fire to Moloch, the Ammonitish idol.§ The place was also called Tophet,‖ and that,

* Univ. Expos., Vol. 2, pp. 361—366. † גֵּי הִנֹּם

‡ Josh. 15 : 8; 18 : 6. § 2 Chron. 33 : 6. ‖ 2 Kings 23 : 10.

as is supposed, from the noise of drums, (Toph signifies a drum,) a noise raised on purpose to drown the cries of the helpless infants."*

"The word *Gehenna* is derived, as all agree, from the Hebrew words *ge hinnom;* which, in process of time, passing into other languages, assumed diverse forms; e. g. Chaldee *Gehennom*, Arabic *Gahannam*, Greek *Gehenna*. *The valley of Hinnom* is a part of the pleasant wadi or valley, which bounds Jerusalem on the south.† Here, in ancient times, and under some of the idolatrous kings, the worship of Moloch, the horrid idol-god of the Ammonites, was practised. To this idol, children were offered in sacrifice.‡ If we may credit the Rabbins, the head of the idol was like that of an ox; while the rest of the body resembled that of a man. It was hollow within; and being heated by fire, children were laid in its arms and were literally roasted alive. We cannot wonder, then, at the severe terms in which the worship of Moloch is everywhere denounced in the Scriptures. Nor can we wonder that the place itself should have been called Tophet, i. e. *abomination, detestation*, (from *toph, to vomit with loathing.*)§

"After these sacrifices had ceased, the place was

* Campbell's Four Gospels, Diss. 6, Pt. 2, § 1.

† Josh. 15 : 8; 18 : 6.

‡ 2 Kings 23 : 10; Ezek. 23 : 37, 39; 2 Chron. 28 : 3; Lev. 18 : 21; 20 : 2.

§ Jer. 31 : 32; 19 : 6; 2 Kings 23 : 10; Ezek. 23 : 37, 39.

desecrated, and made one of loathing and horror. The pious king Josiah caused it to be polluted, i. e. he caused to be carried there the filth of the city of Jerusalem. It would seem that the custom of desecrating this place, thus happily begun, was continued in after ages, down to the period when our Saviour was on earth. Perpetual fires were kept up, in order to consume the offal which was deposited there. And as the same offal would breed worms, (for so all putrefying meat does of course,) hence came the expression, 'Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'*

"Gehenna, originally a Hebrew word, which signifies *the valley of Hinnom*, is composed of the common noun, *Gee*, valley, and the proper name *Hinnom*, the owner of this valley. The valley of the sons of Hinnom was a delightful vale, planted with trees, watered by fountains, and lying near Jerusalem on the south-east, by the brook Kidron. Here the Jews placed that brazen image of Moloch, which had the face of a calf, and extended its hands as those of a man. It is said, on the authority of the ancient Rabbins, that, to this image, the idolatrous Jews were wont not only to sacrifice doves, pigeons, lambs, rams, calves and bulls, but even to offer their children.† In the prophecy of Jeremiah,‡ this valley is called *Tophet*, from *Toph*, a drum; because

* Stuart's Exegetical Ess., p. 140—141.
† 1 Kings 9 : 7 ; 2 Kings 15 : 3, 4. ‡ Ch. 7 : 31.

the administrators in these horrible rites, beat drums, lest the cries and shrieks of the infants who were burned, should be heard by the assembly. At length, these nefarious practices were abolished by Josiah, and the Jews brought back to the pure worship of God.* After this, they held the place in such abomination, it is said, that they cast into it all kinds of filth, together with the carcasses of beasts, and the unburied bodies of criminals who had been executed. Continual fires were necessary, in order to consume these, lest the putrefaction should infect the air; and there were always worms feeding on the remaining relics. Hence it came, that any severe punishment especially a shameful kind of death, was denominated Gehenna."†

Such is the undisputed derivation of this word, and such its literal meaning. And even Prof. Stuart admits, that "the word Gehenna, when used in respect to a place of punishment, may be used, or might have been used, *literally*." And the question now is, "whether it is employed in its *literal*," or in *a* "*secondary* and spiritual sense, in the New Testament."‡ That it is generally used in a literal sense in the New Testament, I suppose no one will pretend. It will doubtless be admitted, on

*2 Kings 23 : 10.

† Schleusneri Lexicon in Nov. Test. sub voce *Γέεννα*, as quoted in the Univ. Expos., Vol. 2, pp. 354—355.

‡ 1 Exeget. Ess., p. 141.

all hands, at the present day, that it is there used generally in a figurative sense. It is a *figure* of something. This is clear from the whole history of the word. If it refers to future punishment, it is not the *name* of the place where it is to be inflicted, but only a *figure* to *represent* it. This being the case, whether it means any such thing, in any particular place, must be determined, not by the force and meaning of the word itself, but by the connexion in which it is found, or the subject to which it is applied. So much being admitted, it is, in effect, giving up the word as affording any evidence, of itself, of the truth of the doctrine of endless misery, or even of future punishment, however it may be in regard to some of the *texts* where it occurs. Whether it ever refers to any such punishment in the New Testament, can be determined only by an actual examination of all the places where it occurs. If it is used as a figurative representation, the question is—Of what is it a figure? I think it was used by the writers of the New Testament, as a figure of *punishment* in *general*, particularly any peculiarly severe or odious punishment, without any reference to the *place where* inflicted, or its *duration;* and sometimes for anything peculiarly odious and detestable. That such is its meaning, will appear from an examination of the several texts where it occurs in the New Testament.

SECTION III.—NEW TESTAMENT USAGE OF THE TERM GEHENNA.

In the examination of the texts which will come under consideration, I shall offer but little on the negative side of the question; that is, to show the word *gehenna* does *not* mean a place of endless punishment. This has been done very fully and thoroughly by others.* It will be my effort, rather to show what the texts *really mean*, which is the most important matter; and if this is truly represented, those interpretations which make them teach the doctrine of endless punishment, must of necessity be false. My work, therefore, will be *constructive*, rather than *destructive; affirmative* rather than *negative*. In the execution of this work, I shall not go into any lengthy arguments to sustain the explanations that may be given. I shall aim to state my views of the texts that may come under review, as concisely as possible, without going at length into the reasons therefor. I pursue this course because I think it will convey a clearer and more distinct conception of the meaning of the texts, to the minds of most readers, and be quite as satisfactory as a more elaborate method. I shall refer

* See particularly Balfour's First Inquiry, which presents about all that can be said on the negative side of this question.

to such authorities as may be at hand, in confirmation of my positions, so as to enable those who may be disposed, to pursue the inquiry still farther.

The word *Gehenna* occurs in the New Testament just twelve times. Five* of these are parallel with other texts, which reduces the instances of its use to *seven* in number. These will now be examined in the chronological order in which they were uttered, according to the Harmony of the Gospels by Dr. L. Carpenter.

1. Matt. 5 : 22. "But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger *of hell-fire*."†

Upon the word *Gehenna*, in this text, Mr. Barnes says,—"In this verse it denotes a degree of suffering higher than the punishment inflicted by the *court of seven*, or the *sanhedrim*. And the whole verse may therefore mean, He that hates his brother without a cause, is guilty of a violation of the sixth commandment, and shall be punished with a severity similar to that inflicted by the *court* of judgment. He that shall suffer his passions to trans-

* Matt. 5 : 30. Mark 9 : 43 and 45. Luke 12 : 5. Matt. 18 : 9.

† ἔνοχος ἔσται εἰς τὴν γεένναν τοῦ πυρός, *shall be obnoxious to the gehenna of fire*.—Campbell's note *in loco*. "To be *in danger* of evil of any kind, is one thing; to be *obnoxious to it*, is another. The most innocent person may be in danger of death, it is the guilty only who are obnoxious to it."

port him to still greater extravagances, and shall make him an object of derision and contempt, shall be exposed to still severer punishment, corresponding to that which the *sanhedrim*, or council, inflicts. But he who shall load his brother with odious appellations and abusive language, shall incur the severest degree of punishment, represented by being burnt alive in the horrid and awful valley of Hinnom."*

"Three degrees of anger are specified, and three corresponding gradations of punishment, proportioned to the different degrees of guilt. Where these punishments will be inflicted, he does not say, he need not say. The man, who indulges any wicked feelings against his brother man, is in this world punished; his anger is the torture of his soul, and unless he repents of it and forsakes it, it must prove his woe in all future states of his being."†

The antithesis, in this passage, lies between the material views of the Jews, who regarded men's overt acts of wrong, only as subjecting them to the

* Note *in loco*.

† Livermore's Com. *in loco*; also Dr. A. Clarke, Bloomfield, Kenrick and Paige *in loco*. Dr. Clarke, Kenrick and Paige seem to regard the whole in a strictly literal sense, rather than figurative; while Bloomfield, Barnes and Livermore seem to think the council, sanhedrim and gehenna mere figures; Mr. B. and Dr. Bloomfield of future punishment only, and Mr. Livermore of punishment in general, without any reference to the *place where* inflicted, or the *time when*, or its *duration*.

retributions of the Almighty, and the more spiritual views of Jesus, who maintained that the thoughts, feelings, desires and purposes of the individual, though never carried out in action, exposed him equally to punishment, with overt acts.* And in my view, he did not refer to these several kinds of death inflicted by the Jews, as the penalties to be suffered for these sins; or to these tribunals as taking cognizance of these offences. They are referred to only as an *illustration* of the *principle* upon which God would deal with men for their evil and malicious thoughts, feelings, desires and purposes. What he means to say is, that according to his religion, punishment would be inflicted upon men for these things, as well as for their overt acts; and that, as in these, it would be severe, in proportion to their malignity, and the evil they were calculated to produce.†

2. Matt. 5: 29—30. "And if thy right eye offend‡ thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, *and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*◊ And if thy right hand offend‡ thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee, for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, *and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*"◊

* Matt. 5: 28; 15: 19. † Univ. Miscel., vol. 2, p. 184—6.

‡ "We have no single word to express the import of σκανδαλίζω, which is peculiar to ecclesiastical Greek. It denotes *to cause to fall*, either from duty or allegiance. The noun σκάνδαλον, denotes the *cause of sin or desertion, —a stumbling-block.* Dr. L. Carpenter's Note *in loco.*

◊ καὶ μὴ ὅλον τὸ σωμά σου βληθῇ εἰς γεένναν, *and not thy whole body should be thrust into gehenna.*

The duty enjoined in this text is ; " Deny thyself what is even the most desirable and alluring, and seems the most necessary, when the sacrifice is demanded by the good of thy soul. Some think that there is an allusion to the amputation of diseased members of the body, to prevent the spread of any disorder."* This, I apprehend, is the true idea. When a mortal disease seizes upon some one of the limbs, it becomes necessary to have that limb removed, to prevent the infection from spreading through the whole body, and filling it with disease and torture, and ultimately reducing it to a mass of loathsome corruption ; so when any evil passion springs up in the soul, and is leading the individual into sin, he must expel it from him, or, like a plague, it will spread through his whole moral constitution, filling it with disease, putrefaction and torment, and making it as odious and abominable, as the valley of Hinnom,—a fate as dreadful, in a moral point of view, as to suffer capital punishment, by being burned alive in this loathsome and detestable place ; or being executed, and then having the body thrown into this receptacle of filth, to putrefy and be consumed by the fire and worms with the rest of the offal of the city.

Hence it is said,—" As it would be better to lose a limb, than to have the whole body become diseased

* Bloomfield's Note *in loco*.

and putrid, and finally cast into the valley of Hinnom, the place of abomination,—the deepest disgrace of which a Jew could conceive,—so it would be better to crush and destroy any passion, however painful the struggle, than to have the whole moral system become infected, and to incur the disgrace and punishment which might well be called the worm and fire of *Gehenna.*"*

"The main idea here conveyed, is that of punishment, extreme suffering, and no intimation is given as to its place, or its duration, whatever may be said in other texts in relation to these points. Wickedness is its own hell. A wronged conscience, awakened to remorse, is more terrible than fire or worm. In this life and in the next, sin and woe are forever coupled together. God has joined them, and man cannot put them asunder."†

3. Matt. 10: 28 "But fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body *in hell.*"‡ Luke 12: 4, 5.

The most natural construction of this text seems to be this,—Be not afraid of men, who, when they exert their utmost power, can only kill the body, but cannot touch the soul. They may destroy the natural life, the temporary dwelling-place of the soul; but this is a small matter. It will not inter-

* Paige's Com. *in loco.* † Livermore's Com. *in loco.*
‡ *ἐν γεέννῃ, in Gehenna.*

rupt the bliss of the soul. Not even this can be affected without your consent; much less its existence. Both are beyond their reach. They may destroy the body by the punishments inflicted in that loathsome and abhorred place, called *Gehenna*; but this will do you no harm as moral beings. Therefore, be not afraid of them, seeing they can do so little, even when they do their worst. But I tell you rather to fear God, who has far greater power; who is able utterly to *annihilate* both body and soul, your whole being, in some manner equally horrible with having your body consumed in the valley of Hinnom.

It appears to me, that the point of contrast between men and God, is in reference to their *power*. The power of men can accomplish but little, even when exerted to its utmost. It can reach only to the temporary dwelling-place of the soul, which must, sooner or later, fall to decay, if left to the operation of natural laws. But God's power is so great, that he can not only do what men may perform, but much more. While men can destroy the *habitation* only, God can destroy both the *habitation* and the *inhabitant*, without implying that either will be done. It is a simple contrast of the abilities of the parties.

This view seems to be confirmed by the circumstances of the case. Jesus was giving his disciples directions concerning the promulgation of his reli-

gion. He and they knew, that, in the prosecution of this work, they should not only suffer all manner of privations, but be exposed to physical death by the hands of their fellow-men, on account of their labors and efforts. And it is his object to guard their minds against such a fear of men, as would lead them to swerve from duty, clothed in as much power as they might be, by contrasting their highest power with that of God. It is a mere contrasting of the ability of God and men, not their *dispositions*, or what they will actually do. It is saying to them, that if there was reason to fear men on account of their *power*, they had much greater reason to fear God—as much greater reason as his power is greater than theirs; that if they felt any shrinking from the performance of their duties, for fear of the evils men could bring upon their bodies, they should remember that God, who will in no wise clear the guilty, is able to do far more—to destroy or annihilate the soul as well as the body—not implying, by any means, that God *would* annihilate their whole being, even should they prove recreant to their trust, through fear of men. It affirms nothing as to what would be their punishment in such an event; but simply implies that they would render themselves obnoxious to a punishment proportionate to their guilt.

That *Gehenna*, in this text, cannot mean a place of punishment in another world, is manifest from

the fact, that the exhortation is addressed particularly to the disciples, who, if the common views are correct, were in no sort of danger of such a punishment. And even if it did refer to such a place, it would afford no evidence in favor of the doctrine of eternal punishment; for it says not a word about their being *punished* there; but that their whole being *may* be DESTROYED in that place. Upon this supposition, it proves ANNIHILATION, if it proves anything.*

"That it was the design of Christ, to lead his disciples to reverence the surpassing power of God, which he thus illustrated, and not to make them fear an actual destruction of their souls and bodies in Gehenna, seems evident from the words that immediately follow. For he proceeds to show them that *that* power was constantly exerted in their behalf—not against them. See the following verses."†

* I am aware, that the idea commonly attached to the words *kill* and *destroy* in this text, is to *torture* or *torment*. But this is an idea which is no more naturally expressed by the original words *ἀποκτείνω*, rendered to *kill*, in the first clause, and *ἀπολλυμι*, translated *to destroy*, in the last clause, than it is by these English words. To *torture* or *torment* is by no means the *usual* signification of these words; and I doubt whether they ever occur in this unusual sense in the New Testament, though they are of very frequent occurrence; *ἀποκτείνω* occurring in *seventy-five* instances, and *ἀπολλυμι*, in *eighty-five* cases. Univ. Expos., Vol. 4, pp. 166, 167. Mr. Donnegan defines *ἀπολλυμι*, primarily, "*to destroy utterly.*"

† Univ. Expos., Vol. 4, p. 169. Paige's Com. *in loco.*

4. Matt. 18: 8, 9. "Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foot offend* thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast *into everlasting fire*.† And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast *into hell fire*."‡

The parallel passage in Mark is recorded in phraseology somewhat different; and as both evidently mean the same thing, and are used to represent the same conversation of our Lord, they will naturally aid in explaining the peculiar phraseology of each. I will, therefore, quote this passage, that the reader may have both before him at once.

Mark 9: 43—48. "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than to have two hands to go *into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched*,◊ where their worm dieth not, *and their fire is not quenched*.‖ And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet, to be cast *into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched*;◊ where their worm dieth not, *and the fire is not quenched*.‖ And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God, with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast *into hell-fire*;¶ where their worm dieth not, *and their fire is not quenched*."‖

The general sentiment of these texts is the same as in one before noticed; but they are distin-

* See note on page 216, of this work.

† εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον, *into the fire the everlasting.*

‡ εἰς τὴν γεένναν τοῦ πυρός, *into the Gehenna of fire.*

◊ εἰς τὴν γεένναν, εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον, *into the Gehenna, into the fire unquenchable.*

‖ καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται, *and the fire not to be extinguished.*

¶ εἰς τὴν γεενναν τοῦ πυρός, *into the Gehenna of fire.*

guished by somewhat peculiar phraseology, especially this last. Still the whole of it is derived from what was literally true of the valley of Hinnom, after its desecration. Perpetual fires were kept there, and it swarmed with worms as we have seen.* This fire is called *everlasting*, not because it is absolutely endless in duration ; but to represent its *uninterrupted character*. For the word rendered *everlasting*, as we have seen,† has more the sense of *uninterrupted*, than of *endless* duration ; a duration in which there is no *break* or *interruption* so long as it lasts, be that longer or shorter. This was the character of the fire in *Gehenna*. It was continual and uninterrupted, in consequence of the constantly renewed supply of fuel to feed it, until, from the want of this supply, it became extinct.

Although the imagery of the last quoted text is much more terrific than in the first, this very imagery only serves to confirm the view above presented. The fire is here called *unquenchable*, with particular allusion to what the prophet says ;‡ and there are said to be undying worms there. It was a fire that burned *continually*, and a place that *continually* swarmed with worms, and would do so as long as the place maintained its characteristics as then known. This view is confirmed by the use

* See page 210, of this work. † See p. 152, of this work.
‡ Isaiah 46 : 24, from which these peculiar forms of expression are taken almost literally.

of the word rendered *unquenchable*, by the prophet, alluded to above, and the common usage of it by other writers. Josephus uses it in describing the fire upon the altar in the temple of Jerusalem, and so of others.* These facts are added only to present a stronger and more lively image of the loathsome and abhorrent character of that place; and what can be more so, than that of fomenting filth, filled with worms, in which fire is smouldering and filling the air with its horrid and intolerable stench? But these worms have *ceased* to exist, and this fire has been long since *extinguished.*

Thus much for the literal meaning of this text. But are we to take this text in a literal sense? Will any one maintain, that our Lord meant to contrast the life his gospel is calculated to impart, and the kingdom he came to establish, with the literal horrors of the valley of Hinnom? I think not. Every one, it appears to me, must see, the horrors of this place are used only as figures; and the question at once arises—Figures of what? I answer—Figures of the consequences of sin, of neglect of duty, of violation of God's law. And these figures are not used so much to represent the *duration* of punishment, as to indicate its intensity, and its uninterrupted, unmitigated, continuous character, so long as it lasts, which must be as long as its cause

* Univ. Expos., Vol. 4, pp. 106, 107, where a number of examples are quoted from different authors.

continues; i. e. sin in the soul. How long this will continue, in any individual case, is a matter which cannot be determined, until it shall have transpired, as we have already shown.* *Where* this fearful punishment will be inflicted, no intimation is given, as none is needed; for wherever sin exists, there it will be punished; because sin and its misery are inseparably united, and the latter will adhere to every soul so long as the former. When the one ceases, then will the other also.†

5. Matt. 23: 15. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more *the child of hell*,‡ than yourselves."

The word translated *child*, would be more literally rendered *son;* and it is used to express a great variety of relations. In this place it means *like*, or *in resemblance of.*§ The scribes and Pharisees were abominably wicked, malicious and persecuting. So vile and polluted, yet so hypocritical, were they, as to be compared to whited sepulchres. They were so full of all that was corrupt and odious, as to be the objects of loathing and abhorrence to every pure and good mind acquainted with their real characters. They had a sufficiently strong resemblance to that

* See pp. 129—133 of this work.

† Those who may wish for a more minute and particular exposition of this text, are referred to Paige's Com. *in loco.*

‡ *υἱὸν γεέννης, a son of Gehenna.*

§ Universalist Expositor, Vol. 1., pp. 312—316.

most odious and abominable of all places, the valley of Hinnom; but their proselytes were twice as bad, —vastly more wicked, odious, abominable, malicious and persecuting, than they were themselves; they bore a more exact resemblance to *Gehenna*, than the scribes and Pharisees did themselves.

Hence it is said,—"It was the complaint of the Jewish nation, that the proselytes were 'scabs of the church,' and hindered the coming of the Messiah, as being ignorant of the law, and bringing in revenge. Justin Martyr informs us of them, that these 'proselytes did not only disbelieve Christ's doctrine, but were twice more blasphemous against him than the Jews themselves, endeavoring to torment and cut them off wheresoever they could, they being in this the instruments of the scribes and Pharisees."*

6. Matt. 23: 33. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape *the damnation of hell*."†

The word rendered *damnation*, in this text, would be more properly translated *condemnation* or *punishment*.‡ The meaning of this text is,—How can ye escape from a punishment as dreadful as that of being burned alive in that most execrable of all places, the valley of Hinnom; or how can you escape from,

* Whitby, Com. and Note, *in loco*.

† ἀπὸ τῆς κρίσεως τῆς γεέννης, *from the punishment of Gehenna*.

‡ Campbell's Notes on Mark 12: 40; 16: 16; Matt. 23: 23; John 5: 22.

or avoid the most dreadful punishment God sees fit to inflict upon men; the language denoting, not the *duration*, but the intensity and severity of the punishment. Hence it is said,—"*Gehenna*, or the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, where the filth of the city and the bodies of malefactors were thrown, to be consumed by fire and worms. Hence it was used as a figure for a keen and terrible punishment."* "The damnation of hell, or of Gehenna; which place the Jews understood to indicate the most acute misery."† This text, I apprehend, is to be taken for punishment in general, without particular reference to the kind, or when or where inflicted, or how long it is to endure. This is as indefinite and uncertain as the duration of any individual soul in sin.†

7. James 3: 6. "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; *and it is set on fire of hell*."‡

The last clause of this text, is manifestly figurative; for no man, in his senses, will maintain, that an unruly, or ungoverned tongue, is literally set on

* Livermore's Com. *in loco*.

† Paige's Com. *in loco*, where a somewhat different view of the matter is taken. This respected author thinks the punishment is to be understood as *specific*, rather than *general*.

‡ *καὶ φλογιζομένη ὑπὸ τῆς γεέννης, and being inflamed of the Gehenna.*

fire from hell, if this word is taken in its common acceptation. It being a figure, the question very naturally arises—From what is it drawn? From *Gehenna* taken in its literal sense, or from a *place* which it is supposed to *represent* as a *symbol?* From a place well known and most deeply abhorred by those to whom the language was addressed, or a place which was a mere ideal thing, about the very existence of which there was dispute among them? It certainly seems quite unnecessary, to say the least, to resort to this sort of compound figure, to express an idea, which would be more forcibly expressed by a simple figure, and adopting the term *Gehenna* in its literal sense; for this would give it all the force it could possibly have.

The simple meaning, therefore, of this text, I take to be, that an unruly or ungoverned tongue, not only defiles and pollutes the whole man, in whom it resides, and blackens everybody about him, by its lies and slanders, but inflames society, and is calculated to make it as uncomfortable to its members, and as loathsome and abhorrent to all good and peace-loving persons, as the filth and smoke of the valley of Hinnom were to the eyes and nostrils of those who might enter it; and that the principles and passions which move such a tongue, are as vile and polluted, and odious and offensive in the eyes

of the pure and good, as was this valley to the mind of a Jew.*

These are all the instances where the word *Gehenna* occurs in the New Testament, and such are my views of their meaning, which are commended to the serious attention of every reader. Of their correctness he is left to judge, with a full assurance that they must commend themselves to his reason and common sense.

* See Whitby *in loco*, and Balfour's First Inquiry, p. 194.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL CONCLUSION.

In view of what has been presented in this volume, it must be manifest to all intelligent and reflecting minds, that the objections commonly urged against Universalism, are either without foundation, or utterly inapposite. It must be equally plain, that the objections urged against this doctrine, from the Scriptures, are, to say the least, very far from being conclusive in the case. Indeed, I cannot see how any person, with the facts herein presented before him, can regard the testimony commonly adduced, in favor of the doctrine of endless misery, from the Bible, as sufficient to warrant the belief of so tremendous a doctrine. I think all candid and fair-minded men must concede, that if this fearful doctrine is true, some other and more decisive testimony must be adduced, so far as the Scriptures are concerned, than that which has been commonly relied upon, for this purpose.

In attaining the position at which I have arrived in this volume, I am aware, that the way is only fairly cleared and well laid open for the introduction of affirmative testimony, in behalf of Universal-

ism. No direct evidence has been produced in behalf of this idea, in what has been said. This was not the design. Its aim has been merely defensive; to remove objections, that the mind of the reader might be prepared, fully to appreciate and feel the force of the arguments of others of an affirmative character. Still, the position that has been attained, is, of itself, a presumption in favor of the truth of the doctrine of universal salvation. If the doctrine of the "absolute eternity" of punishment is not true, as we have a right to assume, if the evidence in its favor is inconclusive, then only one of two things can be true, either annihilation or universal salvation. And if the universality and eternity of human existence is admitted, then universal salvation must be the truth; for nothing else can possibly be the case, unless it can be supposed, that the human soul may be in a state and condition, where it neither enjoys happiness nor suffers misery. This, I suppose, no one will maintain.

Still, I am aware, that there is a very serious difficulty, in the way of many persons coming to view the matter in the light presented in this volume, from the common apprehensions about the Scripture representations of rewards and punishments. It has been the practice so long, to regard the Bible as speaking in *one* place, *exclusively* of rewards and punishments in *this* state, and in *another* as speaking only of *future* rewards and

punishments, that it is exceedingly difficult to bring their minds to right apprehensions upon the subject, plainly as it is exhibited upon the very face of the Scriptures; for nothing is more difficult than to break up old associations, when attached for a long time to particular words and phrases.

But I apprehend, however numerous the passages of Scripture, in which the idea of future rewards and punishments is *involved*, it will be very difficult to fix upon any *one* text, and show, by fair argument, that it is exclusively *confined* to this meaning. And the same may be said, if they are attempted to be restricted to this state; for what is true of one state, in regard to the cause of punishment, is true of the other also.

The truth is, the Bible makes no such distinction between present and future rewards and punishments, as is commonly supposed. It does not here describe a reward to be bestowed, or a punishment to be inflicted in *this* life only; and there, those to be enjoyed or suffered exclusively in a *future* state. It lays down the *great principle*, that virtue and its rewards, and vice and its punishment, are inseparably united; that this is a law of God's moral government, as eternal and immutable as that government itself. Both the bliss of the righteous and the misery of the wicked, begin in *this* world, and are as truly enjoyed and suffered in this, as they can be in any world. Whether the bliss of the

one, or the misery of the other, extends beyond this life, must depend entirely upon the circumstance, whether they will *continue* to sustain their respective characters in that world. If those who are bad *here*, *continue* to be bad *there*, they must *continue* to suffer the miserable consequences of their wickedness, which attached to them here; and if those who are good in this world, *continue* to be good in the world to come, they will *continue* to enjoy the reward of their goodness *there* as *here*. The only difference between the two states will be, that the miseries of the bad, and the enjoyments of the good, must be immensely greater in degree, in that world, than in this, from the very nature of the case. They are the same in kind, though different in degree.

Hence the whole controversy between the believer in the doctrine of endless punishment, and the Universalist, turns upon the single point, whether human character is immutably, unalterably and eternally fixed in the world to come. This is really the whole matter in controversy, between these two classes of religionists. To make out the "absolute eternity" of punishment, it must be proved, that human character is or will become immutably fixed; and all that the application of any particular terms signifying duration, to punishment can do, is to afford a reflected argument in favor of this idea.

Thus it will be seen, that this controversy may be brought within a very narrow compass—reduced to a very simple and intelligible proposition. Let all the efforts of the antagonists of Universalism be directed to this single point, and the matter would be rendered more intelligible to common minds, and bring it more clearly and distinctly before them, and place the matter more entirely within their grasp. Will they do this? We shall see. In the mean time, I may remark, that if this point cannot be sustained, Universalism must be regarded as established beyond all controversy.

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